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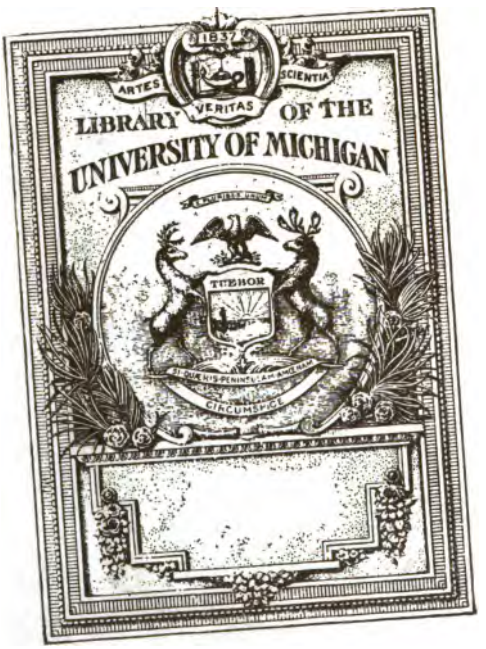
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# MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

## *FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF ADULT ILLITERATES*

BY

Mrs. CORA (WILSON) STEWART

Chairman Illiteracy Commission, National Education Association; Chairman Illiteracy Committees: National Council of Education, and General Federation Womens' Clubs.

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TO THE VOLUNTEER TEACHERS IN THE MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS, WHOSE VISION, COURAGE AND SELF-SACRIFICE MADE IT POSSIBLE TO BLAZE THE TRAIL FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF THE NATION'S ILLITERATES, THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

419990

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## PREFACE

Many requests have come for a book telling the story of the moonlight schools. Teachers have expressed their need of such a book for their inspiration and guidance, and the general public has evidenced a desire to know more of the dramatic story of the origin, development and goal of these schools.

"I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience," said Patrick Henry. The crying need of "the lamp of experience" to guide the teachers who are engaged in the fight on illiteracy impels the author to present the experience of years of strenuous campaigning against illiteracy in book form and likewise to show forth the achievements of adults who have passed from the darkness of illiteracy into light through the portals of the moonlight schools.

This book is purposely written in simple language and kept free from technical terms. It is a message to the teachers of every land and would be as easy and accessible to those who have had little preparation for teaching as to those who are experienced and trained. Not for the teacher alone is it written but even those who are not engaged in teaching will find a message, it is hoped, within its covers.

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# INTRODUCTION

It has been said that every great movement for freedom originated among mountain people. However true or untrue this may be, the movement to emancipate the illiterates of America originated among the people of the mountains of Kentucky. It is not something that America is doing for the mountain people, but something which they have contributed to the nation and to the world.

This was acknowledged by the United States Commissioner of Education in a bulletin issued in 1913 in which he said,

"I submit herewith, for publication as a Bulletin of the Bureau of Education, a statement showing in some detail the amount of illiteracy in the United States among men, women and children over ten years of age according to the Federal Census of 1910; also a brief statement

of an experiment which has been conducted for nearly two years in one of the mountain counties in eastern Kentucky having a large number of illiterates in its population, to ascertain if it were possible to teach these illiterate grown-up men and women and older children to read and write, and whether other men, women and children with very meager education would respond to the opportunity to learn more of the arts of the school. The success of this experiment, made under very difficult circumstances, has been so great as to inspire the hope that, with the cooperation of schools, churches, philanthropic societies, cities, counties, States and the Nation, the great majority of the five and a half million illiterates over ten years of age in the United States may, in a few years, be taught to read and write and something more."

# MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

# Moonlight Schools

## CHAPTER I

### THE PEOPLE WHO GAVE THE MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS TO THE WORLD

In the mountains of Kentucky there has been buried a treasure of citizenship richer far than all its vast fields of coal, its oil, its timber or mineral wealth. Here lives a people so individual that authors have chosen them as their theme and artists as their subjects to interpret to the world a people with a character distinctive, sturdy, independent and rugged. This is a stock in which great movements can have their origin. No inferior people, no degenerate stock can embrace and demonstrate with enthusiasm new truths. These people are descended from the best ancestry—Virginia and North Carolina—that traces back to England,

Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Theirs was, in the main, an educated ancestry; some of their forefathers read Latin, and some of them Greek. Here and there in the mountain cabin and farm-house may be found an ancient copy of Cæsar, Virgil, Chaucer and other rare old books, useless to the possessors save as relics of the past. They are a people of arrested civilization, who sing the ballads sung in England three hundred years ago and forgotten there now, and who use expressions that belong to the centuries past. Not all by any means, but some of them live lives such as were lived in rural England and in the hills of Scotland two hundred years ago. They have the blood and bearing of a noble people; they are a noble people. Possessed of a high degree of intelligence, they have not degenerated even though deprived for years of educational opportunities, but have preserved the sturdy traits of their Scotch-Irish, English and Welsh ancestors.

Their capacity for learning has always been immense and their desire for it has been

equally so. Of all the authors who have chosen them as their theme and the artists who have recently begun to present them as a type, none have seemed to catch, or, at least, all have failed to portray, the dominant thing in mountain life, the strongest urge of the mountaineer's soul—his eager, hungry, insatiable desire for knowledge. It is this which has sent mountain girls and boys walking a hundred miles or more to reach the school where they could work their way through. It is the thing which has caused many a slender mountain maid and many a frail lad to assume the work of a man when by so doing they could earn a little money to provide for a few weeks in school. It is the same desire that has caused many a mountaineer to give his last few acres of land, his labor and his last dollar to found a school where his children and his neighbor's children might have an opportunity to learn. But, intense as this fervor for education has been, it has had to satisfy itself with looking back to the time when "Gran'pap was an educated man," and for-

ward to the time when the children and grandchildren would have an education. There was a lack of hope for the present and passing generation, a broad gap between the past and the future culture, which seemed to condemn many brilliant minds to an intellectual grave. Many of these people had never been permitted, for reasons all too tragic, to enter school, or if enrolled, they had been stopped at the end of a week, a month or at the close of their first term. There were married folk, who if they could even have overcome their embarrassment and summoned courage in later life to seek a school, would have found none open to them. In a land where people live long, these men and women, thirty, forty and fifty years of age, with, perhaps, a good quarter of a century, and many of them a half century, ahead of them—what must be done with them? Shall they be considered the wasted citizens of a state that cares not to redeem and use them, and of a nation that does not need such character and such brain?

These mountain people now stand at the threshold of a new civilization, eager and hopeful, anxious to enter in and take their part in the work of the world. They need the world's help, its best thought, its modern conveniences, but not more than the world needs them. In a day when racial groups weld themselves together in America and seek to advance the welfare of the country from which they came rather than the welfare of the nation which has received them into its bosom, it is comforting to remember that in these mountains of the southern states America has a reservoir of strength and patriotism in the millions of pure Anglo-Saxon Americans.[1] It is a reservoir that should not be kept walled in, nor should

[1] From Roosevelt's "Winning of the West."

Along the western frontier of the colonies that were so soon to be the United States, on the slopes of the wooded mountains, and in the long, trough-like valleys that lay between the ranges, dwelt a peculiar and characteristically American people.

These frontier folk, the people of the up-country, or back-country who lived near and among the forest-clad mountains, far away from the long settled district of flat coast plain and sluggish tidal river, were known to themselves and to others as backwoodsmen. They all bore a strong likeness to one another in their habits of thought and ways of living and

it be turned back when it attempts to flow out over the land, but should be developed and permitted to send its strength to every section

differed markedly from the people of the older and more civilized communities to the eastward.

The backwoodsmen were Americans by birth and by parentage, and of mixed race; but the dominant strain in their blood was that of the Presbyterian Irish—the Scotch-Irish as they were often called. Full credit has been awarded the Roundhead and the Cavalier for their leadership in our history; nor have we been altogether blind to the deeds of the Hollander and the Huguenot; but it is doubtful if we have wholly realized the importance of the part played by that stern and virile people, the Irish, whose preachers taught the creed of Knox and Calvin. These Irish representatives of the Covenanters were in the west almost what the Puritans were in the Northeast, and more than the Cavaliers were in the South. Mingled with the descendants of many other races, they nevertheless, formed the kernel of the distinctively and intensely American stock who were the pioneers of our people in their march westward, the vanguard of the army of fighting settlers, who with axe and rifle won their way from the Alleghenies to the Rio Grande and the Pacific.

They did not begin to come to America in any numbers till after the opening of the eighteenth century; but by 1730 they were fairly swarming across the ocean, for the most part in two streams, the larger going to the port of Philadelphia, the smaller to the port of Charleston. Pushing through the long settled lowlands of the seacoast, they at once made their abode at the foot of the mountains, and became the outposts of civilization. From Pennsylvania, whither the great majority had come, they drifted south along the foothills and down the long valleys, till they met their brethren from Charleston who had pushed up into the Carolina back-country. In this land of hills covered by unbroken forests they took root and flourished, stretching in a broad belt from north to south, a shield of sinewy men thrust in between the people of the seacoast and the red warriors of the wilderness. All through this region they were alike; they had as little kinship with the Cavalier as with the Quaker; the west was won by

to carry virility and the very essence of Americanism to communities where these precious things are diluted or dying out.

those who have been rightly called the Roundheads of the south, the same men who, before any others, declared for American independence.

But indeed they were fitted to be Americans from the very start; they were kinsfolk of the Covenanters: they deemed it a religious duty to interpret their own Bible, and held for a divine right the election of their clergy. For generations their whole ecclesiastical and scholastic systems had been fundamentally democratic. In the hard life of the frontier they lost much of their religion, and they had but scant opportunity to give their children the schooling in which they believed; but what few meeting-houses and school-houses there were on the border were theirs.

A single generation, passed under the hard conditions of life in the wilderness, was enough to weld together into one people the representatives of these numerous and widely different races; and the children of the next generation became indistinguishable from one another. Long before the first Continental Congress assembled, the backwoodsmen, whatever their blood, had become Americans, one in speech, thought and character, clutching firmly to the land in which their fathers and grandfathers had lived before them. They had lost all remembrance of Europe and all sympathy with things European; they had become as emphatically products native to the soil as were the tough and supple hickories out of which they fashioned the handles of their long, light axes. Their grim, harsh, narrow lives were yet strangely fascinating and full of adventurous toil and danger; none but natures as strong, as freedom-loving and as full of bold defiance as theirs could have endured existence on the terms which these men found pleasurable. Their iron surroundings made a mould which turned out all alike in the same shape. They resembled one another, and they differed from the rest of the world—even the world of America, and infinitely more the world of Europe—in dress, in customs and in mode of life.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ORIGIN OF THE MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

Strange impressions have prevailed in regard to the moonlight schools. Some have imagined them to be schools where children study and play and scamper on the green, like fairies by the moonlight; others have supposed them to be schools where lovers stroll arm-in-arm, quote poetry and tell the old, old story by the light of a witching moon; others, perhaps because these schools originated in the mountains of Kentucky, have speculated upon their being schools where moonshiners, youthful and aged, are instructed in the best method of extracting the juice from the corn, and, at the same time, one so secretive as to prevent government interference.

Moonlight schools were first established in September, 1911. They had their origin in

Rowan County, Kentucky. They were designed, primarily, to emancipate from illiteracy all those enslaved in its bondage. They were, also, intended to afford an opportunity to those of limited education who desired to improve their store of knowledge.

These schools grew out of the only condition that can give to any institution permanent and substantial growth—an imperative human need. This need was expressed, not by any theorist or group of theorists but by the illiterates themselves.

When I was Superintendent of Rowan County schools, I acted as voluntary secretary to several illiterate folk—a mistaken kindness—I ought to have been teaching them to read and write. Among these folk there was a mother whose children had all grown up without learning save one daughter who had secured a limited education, and when grown, had drifted away to the city of Chicago, where she profited by that one advantage which the city possessed over the rural district—the night school. She

so improved her education and increased her efficiency that she was enabled to engage, profitably, in a small business. Her letters were the only joys that came into that mother's life and the drafts which they contained were the only means of relieving her needs. Usually she would bring those letters to me, over the hill, seven miles, to read and answer for her. Sometimes she would take them to the neighbors to interpret. Once after an absence of six weeks, an unaccustomed period, she came in one morning fondling a letter. I noticed an unusual thing—the seal was broken.

Anticipating her mission, I inquired, "Have you a letter from your daughter? Shall I read and answer it for you?"

She straightened up with more dignity and more pride than I have ever seen an illiterate assume—with more dignity and more pride than an illiterate *could* assume as she replied, "No, I kin answer hit fer myself. I've larned to read and write!"

"Learned to read and write!" I exclaimed

in amazement. "Who was your teacher, and how did you happen to learn?"

"Well, sometimes I jist couldn't git over here to see you," she explained, "an' the cricks would be up 'twixt me an' the neighbors, or the neighbors would be away from home an' I couldn't git a letter answered fer three or four days; an' anyway hit jist seemed like thar was a wall 'twixt Jane an' me all the time, an' I wanted to read with my own eyes what she had writ with her own hand. So, I went to the store an' bought me a speller, an' I sot up at night 'til midnight an' sometimes 'til daylight, an' I larned to read an' write."

To verify her statement, she slowly spelled out the words of that precious letter. Then she sat down, and under my direction, answered it—wrote her first letter—an achievement which pleased her immeasurably, and one that must have pleased the absent Jane still more.

A few days later a middle-aged man came into the office, a man stalwart, intelligent and prepossessing in appearance. While he waited

for me to dispatch the business in hand, I handed him two books. He turned the leaves hurriedly, like a child handling its first books, turned them over and looked at the backs and laid them down with a sigh. Knowing the scarcity of interesting books in his locality, I proffered him the loan of them. He shook his head.

"I can't read or write," he said. Then the tears came into the eyes of that stalwart man and he added in a tone of longing, "I would give twenty years of my life if I could."

A short time afterward, I was attending an entertainment in a rural district school. A lad of twenty was the star among the performers. He sang a beautiful ballad, partly borrowed from his English ancestors but mostly original, displaying his rare gift as a composer of song.

When he had finished, I went over and sat down beside him. "Dennis," I said "that was a beautiful ballad. It is worthy of publication. Won't you write a copy for me?"

His countenance, which had lighted up at my

approach, suddenly fell, and he answered in a crest-fallen tone, "I would if I could write, but I can't. Why, I've thought up a hundred of 'em that was better'n that, but I'd fergit 'em before anybody come along to set 'em down."

These were the three incidents that led directly to the establishment of the moonlight schools. I interpreted them to be not merely the call of three individuals, but the call of three different classes; the appeal of illiterate mothers, separated from their absent children farther than sea or land or any other condition than death had power to divide them; the call of middle-aged men, shut out from the world of books, and unable to read the Bible or the newspapers or to cast their votes in secrecy and security; the call of illiterate youths and maidens who possessed rare talents, which if developed might add treasures to the world of art, science, literature and invention.

## CHAPTER III

### SURPRISES OF THE FIRST SESSION

The opening of the day schools to them was first considered, but the day schools were already crowded with children, and anyway, illiterates, more than any other class, are chained to labor by day. Then came the thought of opening the schools at night, but bad roads with innumerable gullies, high hills and unbridged streams were obstacles to overcome. Besides, the county had been, at one time, a feud county and the people were not accustomed to venturing out much after night. It was decided to have the schools on moonlight nights, and let the moon light them on their way to school.

The teachers of the county were called together and the conditions laid before them. They were asked to volunteer to teach at night

those whom the schools of the past had left behind. To their everlasting credit be it said that not one of those teachers expressed a doubt or offered an excuse, but each and every one of them, without a single exception, volunteered to teach at night, after she had taught all day, and to canvass her district in advance to inform the people of the purpose of these schools and to urge them all to attend.

This preliminary canvass was made on Labor Day, September 4, 1911. The teachers of Rowan County celebrated the holiday by going out into the highways and byways to gather in to school all who needed to learn. They went into every farm-house and hovel, inviting both educated and uneducated to attend.

On September 5, the brightest moonlight night, it seemed to me, that the world had ever known, the moonlight schools opened for their first session. We had estimated the number that would attend, and an average of three to each school, one hundred and fifty in the entire county was the maximum set.

We waited with anxious hearts. The teachers had volunteered, the schools had been opened, the people had been invited but would they come? They had all the excuses that any toil-worn people ever had. They had rugged roads to travel, streams without bridges to cross, high hills to climb, children to lead and babes to carry, weariness from the hard day's toil; but they were not seeking excuses, they were seeking knowledge, and so they came. They came singly or hurrying in groups, they came walking for miles, they came carrying babes in arms, they came bent with age and leaning on canes, they came twelve hundred strong!

There were overgrown boys who had dropped out of school at an early age and had been ashamed to re-enter the day school and be classified with the tiny tots. These came to catch up again. There were maidens who had been deprived of education, through isolation, invalidism or some other cause, but who felt that there was something better for them in life than ignorance. There were women who had mar-

They came carrying babes in arms.

ried in childhood, practically, as is so much the wont of mountain girls—but who all their lives had craved that which they knew to be their inherent right—their mental development. By their sides were their husbands, men who had been humiliated when they had made their mark in the presence of the educated and when forced to ask the election officers to cast a vote for them for the candidates of their choice. There were middle-aged men who had seen a hundred golden opportunities pass them by because of the handicap of illiteracy, whose mineral, timber and material stores, as well as their time and labor, were in the control of the educated men, making them but beggars, as it were, on the bounty of those whom they enriched. There were women whose children had all grown up and vanished from the home, some of them into the far West, and when the spoken word and the hand-clasp had ceased there could be no heart-to-heart communication, for the third person as an interpreter between mother and child is but a poor medium at best. These and other

folk—some half educated and some more—made up these schools.

"Just to learn to read my Bible!" was the cry of many a patriarch and many a withered dame.

"Just to write my children with my own hand, and to read their letters with my own eyes!" was the cry of the mother's heart.

"Just to escape from the shame of making my mark!" was the appeal of the middle-aged man.

"Just to have a chance with the other folk—to be something and to do something in the world!" was the expressed desire of youth and maid.

The youngest student was aged eighteen, the oldest eighty-six. It was a scene to bring tears to the eyes, but surely one to make the heart rejoice, to see those hoary-headed old people and those robust young people seated at their desks studying together, or standing in a row in class to spell, or lined up at the blackboard to solve problems or to write.

Young men and women whose chance had come.

Many of them learned to write their names the first evening, and such rejoicing as there was over this event! One old man on the shady side of fifty shouted for joy when he learned to write his name. "Glory to God!" he shouted, "I'll never have to make my mark any more!"

Some were so intoxicated with joy that they wrote their names in frenzied delight on trees, fences, barns, barrel staves and every available scrap of paper; and those who possessed even meager savings, drew the money out of its hiding place and deposited it in the bank, wrote their checks and signed their names with pride. Soon letters began to go from hands that had never written, before, to loved ones in other counties and in far distant states, and usually the first letter of each student came to the County School Superintendent. In a movement full of romance and heroism, there is no incident more romantic or more delightful to record than the fact that the first three letters that ever came out of the moonlight schools came in this order: the first, from a mother

who had children absent in the West; the second, from the man who "would give twenty years of his life if he could read and write"; and the third from the boy who would forget his ballads 'before anybody come along to set 'em down." This answered the anxious question in our hearts as to whether the moonlight schools had met the need of those who had made the appeal.

## CHAPTER IV

### PIONEER METHODS IN DEALING WITH ILLITERATES

There were no readers in print for adult illiterates, so a little weekly newspaper was published as a reading text.

Can we win?
Can we win what?
Can we win the prize?
Yes, we can win.
See us try.
And see us win!

This was the first lesson. It consisted of simple words, much repetition and a content that related to the activity of the reader, all of which, in a first lesson are essential. The lesson referred to a contest between the moonlight schools, and the element of rivalry thus introduced heightened the interest and produced

a style of reading that rang with the emphasis of a challenge. There was attained immediately what had been striven for in the day schools with only indifferent success—natural expression in reading.

In the later lessons there was a sentence which read, "The best people on earth live in Rowan County." Provincial though this may seem to some and flattery to others, it had the desired effect of keeping the interest at white heat, as perhaps a sentence like—"Foreign birds wear pretty feathers" could not have done. One old man read the sentence and openly expressed his approval. He leaned back in his seat and with a hearty laugh exclaimed, "That's the truth!"

Continuing the lesson, he found a little further along a sentence that read like this, "The man who does not learn to read and write is not a good citizen and would not fight for his country if it needed him."

This was published before the World War when a vast number of illiterate soldiers were

called into the American Army, and is a statement disproved, of course; for illiterate soldiers are courageous and as patriotic as their understanding will permit. But the sentence provoked students to their best possible work. The old man who had exulted in being one of those "best people on earth," became very thoughtful after reading it, and then resumed his study with grim determination, for to a Kentuckian there is no accusation so humiliating as the one that he, under any circumstances will not fight. To a Kentucky mountaineer it is ignominy complete.

The little newspaper had a fourfold purpose: to enable adults to learn to read without the humiliation of reading from a child's primer with its lessons on kittens, dolls and toys; to give them a sense of dignity in being, from their very first lesson, readers of a newspaper; to stimulate their curiosity through news of their neighbor's movements and community occurrences and compel them to complete in quick succession the sentences that followed; to

arouse them through news of educational and civic improvements in other districts to make like progress in their own.

News items such as "Bill Smith is building a new barn" and "John Brown has moved to Kansas" caused them quickly to master the next sentence to see what the next neighbor was doing and we found that curiosity was not confined altogether to the women.

"They are building new steps to the school-house at Slab Camp and putting up hemstitched curtains" was the item that caused Bull Fork moonlight school to build new steps, put up hemstitched curtains and paint the school-house besides.

Other elementary subjects were taught by the question and answer method—sometimes called the Socratic method. Only the minimum essentials were included in the course. For instance, the student might not be able to master American history in one short session; he could not learn the principal events of each President's term, the dates of battles, and the flounderings

of the various political parties, but he could at least learn a limited number of important facts that every American citizen should know.

The ignorance of some people, even native-born Americans, about American history, shows that a few basic facts taught them would be a blessed act of enlightenment. An illiterate old man speaking at a patriotic meeting was heard to say, "Uncle Sam, our President of the United States, is a grand old man." Another during the early stages of the World War declared, "The United States ought to go over and help France. He helped us when we needed it and now we ought to help him."

The drills in history attempted nothing more ambitious in the beginning session than to clear up such wrong impressions, to open up the subject to the students, and to give them a few essential facts that would stand out or, if further advancement were possible, might be the skeleton on which a thorough course could be hung.

Drills in such facts as by whom America was

discovered, by whom it was inhabited and by whom settled; the story of how our independence was won; the name and nature of our first President, may have been history in homeopathic doses, but was eagerly swallowed and was wholesome knowledge for people who knew nothing of the subject. Such cluttering-up facts as the battles we have fought, the number we have killed and mutilated, the traitors we have had, the mistakes we have made in passing and then repealing bad laws, the long struggle to overcome certain glaring evils and to secure certain needed reforms, may well be omitted from a course which requires the utmost condensation.

The drills were elective. Besides history they included civics, English, health and sanitation, geography, home economics, agriculture, horticulture and good roads. Four were to be chosen from these, the four most suitable to the district's needs.

English was one of the most popular drills, as well as one most needed. The letter "g,"

so often ignored by illiterates, in "ing" was reinstated to its proper dignity and use through drills on such words as "reading," "writing," "spelling," "talking," "singing," "cooking," "sewing" and others with a similar ending. Words commonly mispronounced in the community were made the subject of a drill. Such words as "seed," "crick," "kiver," "git," "hit," "hyeard," "tuk," "fust," "haint" and "skeered," were pronounced repeatedly until the right habit was formed, and the most glaring monstrosities of pronunciation were weeded out. A language conscience was created where none had existed before, and a beginning was thus made toward improving bad English—a beginning which, though but a pathway blazed, was expected to lead out into the broad highway of better, if not perfect, speech. This was long before the crusade for better speech in America was inaugurated with its "National Better Speech Week."

It was surprising how readily these grown folk mastered certain subjects. Despite the

fears of some educators that violence was being done to psychology in the attempt to teach them, the grown folk learned, and learned with ease. One eminent psychologist, who early gave encouragement to the movement, wrote me saying,—"In the moonlight schools you are demonstrating what I have always believed, that reading, writing and arithmetic are comparatively easy subjects for the adult mind." Some educators, however, declared preposterous the claims we made that grown people were learning to read and write. It was contrary to the principles of psychology, they said. While they went around saying it couldn't be done, we went on doing it. We asked the doubters this question, "When a fact disputes a theory, is it not time to discard the theory?" There was no reply.

The memory subjects were the most difficult for these adult students. They had passed the "golden memory period," most of them, many years ago, and though they had memorized ballads, folk-lore and recipes to some extent,

Arithmetic was a popular study.

nevertheless, memory was in them a thing practically untrained.

They were taught only a few memory gems. The first one was from Whittier's poem, "Our State." It was the motto at the head of the little newspaper which they used for a reading text:

> The riches of the Commonwealth
> Are free, strong minds and hearts of health,
> And dearer far than gold or grain
> Are cunning hand and cultured brain.

The following lines from Longfellow's "The Ladder of St. Augustine," were popular as a memory gem, comparing as it did with their own ladder of enlightenment, of which they were just mounting the first round:

> The heights by great men reached and kept
> Were not attained by sudden flight,
> But they, while their companions slept,
> Were toiling upward in the night.

Another gem precious to them was this one taught them by a Louisville club woman, who at the age of seventy-five came and traveled over the hills at night, inspired by a desire to

see and to help these men and women who had heroically begun their education late in life:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

Only one complete poem was to be memorized during the session. What should it be? With the world so full of poet lore to choose from, should it be Burns' "To a Mountain Daisy," Bryant's "To a Waterfowl," Lanier's "Ballad of Trees and the Master," Wordsworth's "The Daffodils," Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" or should some other gem of poetry be bestowed on those who possessed not even one? The one who introduces the first poem to students like these stands on holy ground, and should prayerfully make the choice. As literature, the selection made might be criticised by some, but as the needed inspiration, the choice was one that met the test.

A man who was for twenty-five years president of a normal school in the mountains,

visited the moonlight schools and on hearing the students recite this poem, said, "If these men and women learn nothing else besides this poem during the session it has been worth while for them to attend." It was Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" and the sentiment expressed in these two stanzas found an answering echo in their hearts:

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife.

* * * * * * *

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

## CHAPTER V

### A MOONLIGHT SCHOOL INSTITUTE

The people clamored for the moonlight schools to open the next year. They, and not the teachers, took the initiative and pressed the matter. The teachers responded heartily.

Prior to the opening of the second session, a moonlight school institute was held—the first institute for night school teachers in America, if not in the world. The methods of teaching adult illiterates, materials to use, ways and means of reaching the stubborn and getting them into school and other things relative to the problem of educating adults were discussed. Teachers were not compelled by law to attend this institute, as they were the institute for day-school work but, nevertheless, they did attend, paying their own expenses during the session and participating more earnestly than

they had ever been known to participate in any other institute. They compared their experiences of the previous session, and some cases of supreme sacrifice and rare heroism were unconsciously revealed. Most of them had succeeded with but little effort. They had but to meet the rising tide of eager, hungry-minded adults who came rushing to the schools in almost overwhelming numbers. Others had been misunderstood, but had stemmed the buffeting waves of criticism and misunderstanding and, after being tossed about, had ridden to success. None had failed—not one, though some had been compelled to make two or three efforts before they finally succeeded. One had tried it alone and failed, then enlisted the children as recruiting officers and sent them far and wide to gather in their elders, which they did with remarkable success.

One young woman—a perfect blend of the Scotch-Irish type—who was teaching her first school when the moonlight schools were inaugurated told her story with a twinkle in her eye

that seemed to belie any suggestion of hardships endured.

"I went to the school-house the first evening," she said, "and nobody came. I went the second and there was nobody there. I went the third, fourth and fifth and still no pupils. I said, 'I'm going to be like Bruce and the Spider, I'm going to try seven times,' and on the seventh night when I got to the school-house I was greeted by three pupils. Before the term closed I had enrolled sixty-five in my moonlight school and taught twenty-three illiterates to read and write." This, like all the stories, was modestly told. No mention was made of the day by day visits to the homes of illiterates, the long walks, the hours on horseback, the earnest persuasion, the chill of disappointment when waiting at the school-house alone. The Scotch determination was revealed in the words, "I said I'm going to be like Bruce and the spider, I'm going to try seven times." The twinkle of humor in her eye was at the recollection, no doubt, of the schemes and designs by

which she had outwitted those illiterates and brought them into the school.

One youthful teacher was inclined to apologize for the few she had enrolled and said, "I didn't have as large a school as the others—just four—but they were in earnest, and I did my best with them, and told them I would teach as long as one of them would come," and then she added with an evident thrill of pride, "but I taught a preacher to read and write, and that was something, wasn't it?"

There was no lack of interest or enthusiasm on the part of the volunteer teachers or their pupils, but there was a pitiful lack of suitable text-books and school material for adults, which was voiced many times during the institute as chief of their handicaps. The little newspaper with its reading lessons and drills, a simple copy book, arithmetic taught from the day-school text, these, supplemented by whatever knowledge the teacher could impart or could draw from the community, constituted our supply.

Out of that first institute for night-school teachers we emerged with, perhaps, a few things gained. Our position was strengthened, and we presented a united front, if possible to bring about more unity than had existed the year before; there was a renewed consecration, a common knowledge of all the plans and devices used in the different districts the year before to gain the confidence and secure the attendance of illiterates, and a determination to excel the record of the previous year. Back of us was a battle won; it was the convincing proof that hundreds had been taught, a strength and stay that we had not had in the first year, a mile-stone gained that made the next mile easier to travel, a precedent, which to many is the most powerful argument of any in the world. Some had learned, even the aged and infirm, the poor of sight and dull of mind. Glory be! others could learn, or else must admit themselves more stupid than their neighbors. Each teacher had all the facts, the arguments and the experiences of his fellows, and they knew

his, and there was a crystallization of their enthusiasm, which made them well-nigh irresistible.

In those days of earnest discussion and planning for helping a people who had been abandoned by the educational forces of all time, and a people who, themselves, until the moonlight schools burst upon them, had abandoned hope, there was never a doubt expressed, a complaint made or even a suggestion that this volunteer service was a sacrifice or a hardship, or anything but a holiday joy. To them it was a high adventure, not without its tests of endurance and sincerity, but one whose tests they fully met, even the frailest of them, because their faith was absolute; this faith and one other thing they possessed that gave them victory over all hindrances and obstacles—the right spirit. These two are well-nigh unconquerable elements in any noble endeavor.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND SESSION

The second session surpassed the first in every particular. We enrolled 1,600 students, and taught 350 to read and write. A man aged eighty-seven entered and put to shame the record of the proud school-girl of eighty-six of the year before.

There were many evidences of individual development and achievement. One man, foreign born, who had been working at a lumber camp at the meager wage of $1.50 per day entered the moonlight school and specialized in mathematics—that part of it pertaining to his business, and at the close of the six weeks' session, was promoted at a salary double that which he had received before. Some of the school trustees, who were none too well educated, found in the moonlight school their opportunity to advance, which many of them embraced. One

A man aged 87 entered and put to shame the record of the proud school girl of 86 of the year before.

school trustee who went from the moonlight school into the day school sat in the seat with his own twelve-year-old boy and studied in the same books and recited in the same classes. Another accompanied his wife to the moonlight school, she being the teacher, and he was so delighted with his progress that he enrolled, also, in the day school—and his deportment was good, so the problem of discipline did not enter in to cause domestic infelicity.

We taught two postmasters to read and write, and Uncle Sam still owes for their tuition. How they received their commissions has never been explained, but it is a well-known fact that while the fathers had held the commissions, their daughters had performed the services. When the fathers were emancipated from illiteracy, the daughters were emancipated from the post-offices and were free to follow their own inclinations. One of them entered High School and the other got married.

We taught four Baptist preachers to read and write. While this may seem inconceivable

to some, nevertheless it is a fact that there are men in the mountains and an occasional one in the valleys of the South, who, when they have felt the call to the ministry, have not even permitted the fearful handicap of illiteracy to deter them from doing that which they conceived to be their duty. Naturally these illiterate ministers are much handicapped. "If the blind leads the blind both shall fall into the ditch," is a maxim very applicable here. Illiterate ministers must depend entirely on others to read the Bible to them, and, unfortunately some turned out by the day school are as poor readers as those who attempted to read for the king, according to the story told in one of McGuffey's school books. A reader of this type, attempting to read to an illiterate minister one day, read the sentence, "Paul was an austere man," like this, "Paul was an oyster man." The preacher declared to his congregation the next Sabbath that Peter was a fisherman and Paul was an oyster man, thus giving his congregation an unusual conception of Paul. Another

heard the sentence, "Jacob made booths for his cattle," read, "Jacob made boots for his cattle," and discoursed from the pulpit on "Jacob, that humane man, would not even permit his cattle to go barefooted, but made boots for them to protect their tender feet as they walked over the stones."

These men realized their disadvantages, and they knew the value of the education offered them. They knew it by the best standard by which the value of a thing may be measured—the need of it—a need that in their case had been many times made painfully manifest. So, they accepted the opportunity and used their influence, which was more powerful in the community than might be supposed, among their followers to get them to enroll in the schools. They did more; they gave a new support to the day schools, working for them with zeal, visiting them, speaking in their behalf, and sounding louder than any others the cry, "Everybody, young and old—to the books!"

Nothing better was ever given to any cru-

sader than the privilege which was mine one Sabbath day, that of hearing a minister recently redeemed from illiteracy read from the Bible for the first time and preach from this text, which I thought strangely appropriate, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"

I stood in the door of New Hope school-house one evening and watched the throng come trooping through the moonlight to school. There were farmers and farmers' wives, and their grown sons and daughters; there were former school teachers who had seized this opportunity to break up the stagnation which had overtaken them; there was the community carpenter, the district blacksmith, the postmaster and his wife, the country doctor, the cross-roads merchant, the mill-owner with his crew of illiterate men, all coming joyously, hopefully in quest of knowledge. It was "new hope" indeed to them. Some came to learn, some to teach, but all learned, for those who taught developed amazingly.

"Everybody in school" was the ideal, and it was caught and cherished by children as well as parents. The children exerted a powerful influence in getting their parents to school. The teachers would say to them at the close of the day, "Now, children go home and send your parents to school this evening," and while it was a pleasantry, it was, also, a request and one that they heeded. The children were wonderful recruiting officers for the moonlight schools. They worked and reported their success with the keen enthusiasm of childhood. One little fellow listened to the others and said sorrowfully, "I talked moonlight schools too but it didn't do any good." He persisted, however, and the words, "A little child shall lead them" proved literally true, for the following evening he came to school proudly leading his mother by one hand and his father by the other.

A thousand seeds sown by teachers and school children this year did not bear fruit until the next. Some who did not yield to persuasion and come out to school were found learning in

secret at home. However, there were few who did not seek the school more earnestly than it sought them. These few, from pride, and false pride it was, feared to expose their illiteracy and thought to hide it by remaining at home.

For such as these and the stubborn, the decrepit and the disinclined, a home department was established. Gladys Thompson, a blessed teacher, gone to her reward, and whom these pages would memorialize, finding two in her district who could not attend school at night, one because of feebleness and the other because of defective sight, went to their homes between the hours of her day school and moonlight school and taught them to read and write. Her plan was adopted and proved a valuable adjunct to the work of the moonlight school, especially in dissolving the dregs of illiteracy, in teaching the last few or the lone, difficult one.

Besides the incidents of individual development and individual achievement, a new community spirit was born. A school trustee thus describes the change in his community:

They were schoolmates and that is a tie that binds.

Triplet Ky.
Aug 27, 1913

Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart,
Morehead, Ky.

Dear Mrs. Stewart: I want to thank you you and the teachers of Rowan County for starting this Home Department movement. I live about three miles from the school house and can not attend night school.

Miss Lottie sends a copy for me.

every evening by
them children. I copy
them and send
them back next
morning. I am
44 years old and
this is my first
letter. So I believe
"We are never too
old to learn.
I have three children
enrolled in the Adams
day school and one
in the night school
We are having a
fine school.
I want to thank
you in advance

for the beautiful
Bible which I am
to receive.
Yours respectfully,
Martha J. Kinder

LETTER FROM A HOME DEPARTMENT PUPIL

"I have lived in this district for fifty-five years, and I never saw any such interest as we have here now. The school used to just drag along and nobody seemed interested. We never had a gathering at the school-house and nobody ever thought of visiting the school. We had not had a night school but three weeks until we got together right. We papered the house, put in new windows, purchased new stovepipe, made new steps, contributed money, and bought the winter's fuel.

"Now we have a live Sunday school, a singing school, prayer meeting once each week, and preaching twice a month. People of all denominations in the district meet and worship together in perfect unity and harmony, aged people come regularly, and even people from the adjoining county are beginning to come over to our little school-house."

Good-roads clubs, fruit clubs, agricultural clubs, home economics clubs and Sunday schools were organized. There was an awakened, if not trained leadership, a whetted desire for co-

operative activity where individualism and stagnation had prevailed. Friction and factional feeling melted away in districts where they had existed, and a new spirit of harmony and brotherhood came to take their place. Men and women who had hitherto been divided by contention and strife now worked side by side in concord. They were schoolmates and that is a tie that binds.

## CHAPTER VII

### TO WIPE OUT ILLITERACY THE TEACHER'S GOAL

To wipe illiteracy out of the county was the goal set for the following year. First, the school trustees were induced to take a census of the illiterates. When this was completed, an investigation was made of each individual case. Soon we had on record, not only the name and age of every illiterate in the county, but his history as well, his ancestry, his home environment, his family ties, his religious faith, his political belief, his weaknesses, tastes and peculiarities, and the influence or combination of influences through which he might be reached in case the teacher failed with him.

Each teacher was given the list of illiterates in her district and told to go out and cultivate these people, like a good politician, before the

moonlight schools began. The citizens of the county were enlisted. The slogan "Each one teach one," was adopted and most of the people were glad to obey. Doctors were soon teaching their convalescent patients, ministers were teaching members of their flocks, children were teaching their parents, stenographers were teaching waitresses in the small town hotels, and the person in the county without a pupil was considered a very useless sort of individual. The district with an illiterate in it was a district in disrepute, while the child with an illiterate parent felt that he was a child disgraced. A man redeemed from illiteracy became at once a source of pride and admiration to his neighbors, as well as to himself and family, and, like most new converts to a cause, he exceeded the old adherents in loyalty and zeal.

Some of those who had learned were not only walking evangelists preaching the gospel of "No illiteracy in the county," but became itinerant teachers, going from district to district giving lessons. Those fresh from their

A class of Moonlight School pupils all past 50 years of age.

first contact with the printed page imparted what they had learned, meager though it was, with an enthusiasm, that was possible only to the newly-learned. They were successful teachers. They attempted to give lessons in reading and writing only and to create that self-confidence, which, with adult illiterates, was the first battle to be won. They had the advantage, too, of presenting themselves as examples, as living proof that illiterates could learn. Their visits to illiterate homes started the process of learning in most cases, and cleared the way for the teacher who was to follow with more complete and thorough knowledge.

Each and every district was striving to be the first to wipe out illiteracy. One school trustee, who had been campaigning strenuously all week against illiteracy, came in on Saturday and said with determination, "I'll bet I have illiteracy out of my district before Monday morning. There's only one illiterate over there, and he's a tenant on my place; I'm going to run him out over into Fleming County."

"Oh, no," I protested, "That's not the way to get rid of illiteracy. You must teach him before he goes."

A young teacher who felt somewhat discouraged, came in for some advice. "You gave me a list of sixteen illiterates in my district," said he, "and I've taught fifteen of them to read and write; but there's one stubborn old woman out there who absolutely refuses to learn. I've exhausted my resources with her."

He deserved commendation and he needed encouragement, so I said, "A young man who has made a success as you have done in that most difficult of all places, his home district, who has enrolled one hundred and eleven men and women in his moonlight school and has taught fifteen out of sixteen illiterates to read and write will get the other one. I have no fear but that you will succeed."

We got the illiteracy record and looked up this old woman's history. We found that she thought she was a physician, and felt flattered when anyone sought her services as such.

The young man went back to his district and there developed an eruption on his wrist. He went over and consulted this old woman. She diagnosed his case as erysipelas and proceeded to treat him. She concluded that one who possessed such excellent judgment in the selection of a physician, knew enough to teach her something; so while she treated him for erysipelas, he treated her for illiteracy, and she learned to read and write. He sent in her first letter, enclosed in his own, and wrote in great glee, "Tabor Hill district is freer from illiteracy than Boston; come at once and bring the Bibles." It was the plan at that time to give a Bible to each one who learned to read and write. It was an offer that was made when our vision was small and we could not anticipate the large numbers that would take advantage of it. When hundreds began to claim it, we tried to keep the faith, and some of us have not yet recovered from the strain on our pocketbooks.

I drove out to Tabor Hill one bright moonlit evening to witness the celebration which marked

the banishment of illiteracy from the district. The scene was one good for the eyes of those who delight in a real community center, although at that time such a thing as a community center was known in few rural districts in the United States. But here was the highest ideal of a community center being realized. Every person in the district was at the school-house. The men and women, who had been in their seats bright and early, were gaily chatting; the young people stood around the organ, singing their gladsome songs, and around the house, peering in at the windows, was a cordon of spectators six rows deep.

The newly learned gave an exhibition of their recently acquired knowledge. They read and wrote, quoted history and ciphered proudly in the presence of their world. They did it with more pride than ever high school, college or university graduates displayed on their commencement day.

They were next presented with Bibles, and as they came up one by one, some young and

stalwart, some bent and gray, to receive their Bibles with gracious words of thanks, it was an impressive scene—and when the Jezebel of the community came forward and accepted her Bible and pledged herself to lead a new life forevermore, there was hardly a dry eye in the house.

Lemonade was a thing rarely seen in those parts, a treat indeed, so it was served as the final reward, not from a punch bowl, as it is served in most places, but from the most available thing to be found on Tabor Hill—a lard can. As they passed in line around the receptacle to be served, an old man rose in the back part of the house and said in a loud voice, "Things certainly have changed in this district. It used to be that you couldn't hold meeting or Sunday school in this house without the boys shooting through the windows. It used to be moonshine and bullets; but now it's lemonade and Bibles."

Some teachers found obstacles in their way, such as the prolonged absence of the illiterates

from home, but they watched for their return, and even if they came back and tarried but a short time, they put them for the moment to the book and pen. One teacher said to me, "I have a father and three grown sons in my district who are employed twelve miles from home and are only at home on the Sabbath day. Do you think there would be any harm in my going over there on Sunday and teaching them to read and write?" Remembering those words of the Master when he was asked in regard to healing the withered hand of a man on the Sabbath day—and certainly these were withered hands—and His answer, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day?" I said, "It is a holy day and I think it would be a holy deed." The young man went Sunday after Sunday and taught the father and sons to read and write.

There are masterpieces of art that one would travel many miles to see, but to me there is no picture more beautiful than the one my imagination conjures up of that young teacher, with

those four grown men grouped about him learning to read and write on the Sabbath day.

We tried by every means, to wipe illiteracy out of the county to the last individual. Every one was offered the opportunity and some were offered it repeatedly. The overwhelming majority accepted it with joy and gratitude—a few had to be coaxed. Some few, in their ignorance had a misconception of our motives and stubbornly refused to learn.

When the campaign closed, of the 1,152 illiterates in the county, only 23 were left, and these were classified; six were blind or had defective sight; five were invalids languishing on beds of pain; six were imbeciles and epileptics, two had moved in as the session closed and four could not be induced to learn.

One of the teachers who had taught fifty-six people in her own and other districts to read and write, went into the home of one of these stubborn four after the campaign closed and paid her an exorbitant price for board. She induced this old woman to teach her to knit,

and one day when they were sitting and knitting together and had become fast and familiar friends and the time was ripe, she said to her, "Now you've taught me something valuable, something, in fact, that I've always wanted to know. I'm going to return the favor. I'm going to teach you to read and write, so that you can write to your son in Washington, and the one in Indiana and the one in Illinois. I know how glad they'll be to have letters from their mother's own hand, and how glad you'll be to read letters from them."

While she was speaking, she was placing the material in the old woman's hands, and, almost before she knew it she was copying "E" the first letter in her name.

One morning shortly afterward, that little teacher knocked at my door; I opened and she entered. Without a word, but with shining eyes, she laid that old woman's first letter on my desk.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MOVEMENT EXTENDS TO THE WHOLE STATE OF KENTUCKY

Twenty-five other counties in the State were, by this time, having moonlight schools, and whether it was in a Bluegrass County among the tenant class, in the Purchase among the farmers, in the coal regions among the miners or in mill or distillery sections, there was the same response; men and women thronged to the schools, strove to make up for the time they had lost, and pleaded for a longer term when the session closed. It seemed that the State should extend its aid to these unfortunate men and women and should support the volunteer teachers in their patriotic efforts. So I opened up a correspondence with the Governor on the subject of an Illiteracy Commission. The first letter read as follows:

Morehead, Ky.
Dec. 16, 1913.

Governor James B. McCreary,
Frankfort, Ky.

My dear Governor McCreary:—

I am taking the liberty of addressing you upon the subject of having an Illiteracy Commission formed by legislative act to study the condition of adult illiterates in our State and to give men and women their freedom from this bondage; also, to place our State in a better light before the world. For years there has been a constant cry about Kentucky's appalling percentage of illiteracy. It has been repeatedly declared that we are near the bottom of the literacy scale.

The purpose of forming such a commission would be to promote voluntary effort on the part of the teachers and others and to co-operate with those who are already making an effort. Many teachers have already volunteered, but they need guidance and inspiration and other teachers need to be called upon to volunteer.

We have taught over a thousand men and women in Rowan County during the past three years, and now some twenty-five counties are putting forth an effort along this line. I have hundreds of letters which dem-

onstrate the fact that men and women can learn to read and write in a very short time after their interest is quickened.

I have letters from octogenarians besides many middle-aged and younger men and women. What has been done in Rowan County in three years in reducing and almost wiping out her illiteracy, can be done in Kentucky during the next six years—by the time the Federal census is taken.

This movement started in Kentucky, and Kentucky is the State which should take the initiative and form a commission to advance this important work. I earnestly request that you will include in your message to the Legislature the suggestion that such a commission be formed.

Hoping that you will see the expediency of this matter, and believing that you will stand for the enlightenment of the 208,084 benighted Kentuckians who cannot read or write, I am,

Yours most respectfully,

By return mail came Governor McCreary's answer:

Your letter, dated December 16, 1913, was received this morning.

I thoroughly endorse all you say on the subject of an "Illiteracy Commission"

"formed by legislative act to study the condition of adult illiteracy in our State and to give men and women their freedom from this bondage."

I congratulate you on the strong points presented in your letter, and I will be glad to assist you and to encourage any movement which has for its object the elimination of illiteracy from our State and the education of all our people.

I will refer in my message to an "Illiteracy Commission" and the good work that can be performed by such a commission.

After some further exchange of letters with the Governor on the subject, on February 19, 1914, he wrote:

I congratulate you heartily, on the unanimous vote of both branches of the General Assembly in favor of the bill providing for the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission. Your address and the strong arguments in favor of this much-needed legislation caused its passage without opposition.

There is nothing in life more pleasant than to feel that you are living for the benefit of humanity and to contribute to the welfare of men and women.

I respect and admire you for devoting your intellect and energies to your good work among adult illiterates in Kentucky.

The Governor appointed J. G. Crabbe, President of the Eastern Kentucky State Normal, H. H. Cherry, President of the Western Kentucky State Normal, Miss Ella Lewis, Superintendent of Grayson County schools and myself as members of the newly created Illiteracy Commission. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction was a member ex officio.

Here was a Commission new to the world, without chart, guide or compass, starting to attack adult illiteracy, a thing supposed to be invincible. Nobody had even undertaken to abolish adult illiteracy before, so there was no precedent and no literature. The State had not appropriated a dollar for the Commission's work and there was not a dollar in hand. Scoffers stood on every corner predicting dire failure. Illiteracy statistics were challenged and disputed and much energy that could have been used in the fight on illiteracy was used by

the opposition in trying to disprove the statistics, while the proof was lying buried in a vault in the Federal Census Bureau at Washington. The enlightening of public opinion, the quickening of the missionary spirit, the arousing of state pride and the opening of pocketbooks to finance the movement were some of the tasks which confronted this Commission of volunteers besides the actual instruction of illiterates.

The public school teachers being already at the helm were in better position to influence the people than any others. They must be the soldiers in this bloodless war against illiteracy but soldiers in the trenches must have organized and intelligent support from those back home. It was everybody's war and volunteers from every profession and every walk of life must be enlisted.

The Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs led out. In recognition of the service rendered by those pioneer teachers of Rowan County, they sent them on a vacation trip to Niagara

Falls and to visit the cities in the northern part of the United States and Canada. It was a novel thing to see public-school teachers traveling in a private car at the expense of the grateful people of a State and being sung to and fêted along the route. It served the purpose of more than a merited reward; it was a stimulus to other teachers and inspired a large number to volunteer.

The Colonial Dames and other women's organizations made a whirlwind campaign for funds; editors agitated through editorials and news items on illiteracy; ministers celebrated, "No Illiteracy Sunday" in the churches and attacked the evil in sermon, song and prayer; bankers were on the alert for illiterates who made their mark on checks and made a campaign to teach each to read and write; jailers put their prisoners to the book; traveling salesmen carried the slogan of the crusade as stickers on their baggage and talked "no illiteracy" as enthusiastically as they talked dry-goods, notions, boots and shoes; college students

placarded the walls of the colleges with illiteracy statistics, used illiteracy as the theme for their finals and each pledged to go home and teach someone to read and write. We even enlisted the politicians and put them to some use. A galaxy of speakers, headed by the Governor and State officials and composed of men and women prominent in politics and in other professions, went out over the State at their own expense fighting illiteracy and urging the establishment of moonlight schools. What these prominent ones advocated so openly, many great souls carried further in some quiet way, either by organizing a moonlight school in some isolated spot, by talking for the cause at some country store, or by going over the hill or across the field to teach some neighbor to read and write.

The Governor had issued a proclamation against illiteracy, and much of this activity was in response to it. As the first proclamation of its kind in history, it is a paper of unusual interest, and is here reproduced:

At the last meeting of the General Assembly of Kentucky, I recommended that a Kentucky Illiteracy Commission be appointed and authorized to inquire into and alleviate the conditions of the adult illiterates in the State, and Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, Chairman, Miss Ella Lewis, Doctor J. G. Crabbe, and Doctor H. H. Cherry were appointed as members of the Commission. This Commission has inaugurated a State campaign, Mrs. Stewart being the accepted leader in the efforts to stamp out illiteracy through moonlight schools and other methods.

Upon their call for volunteers about one thousand teachers offered their services and are teaching or making arrangement to teach at night, and others are daily offering their services.

The aim of the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission is noble and exalted and of the greatest benefit, and there is no subject of more importance or of more far-reaching influence than the elimination of illiteracy from our State. We should educate all of our people, those under twenty-one years of age, and those upward of twenty-one years of age. The perpetuity of our free institutions depends upon the intelligence and virtue of the people.

There are 208,084 men and women in our State who cannot read and write, and of whose intelligent efforts along the lines of education, religion and general development and advancement the State is deprived, and this constitutes a deplorable situation and presents a great and urgent need which should be promptly met and relieved.

Instruction should be offered to the mothers for their own sake and for the sake of the children and the benefit of the State; it should be offered to the fathers for their own sake and for the sake of increasing their earning capacity and of promoting home comforts, and for the sake of a more intelligent exercise of the right of suffrage so as to help maintain good government for the State. Instruction should be offered to the young men and young women who have missed opportunities earlier in life, but may yet take hold of instruction and make achievements.

The instruction of all the illiterates in the State will not only give to Kentucky a higher rank, educationally, among the states, but will give her a new and distinct position as the first Commonwealth which

has ever attempted to accomplish such a great and important work.

I call upon all to help in the cause of education of those under twenty-one years of age and those upward of twenty-one years of age, and I appeal to every public and private school teacher, every professor in our high schools, colleges and universities, all public officials, every representative of the press, every professional man, every farmer, mechanic and business man and every woman who loves the blessings of education, and to all who desire to promote religion, science, literature or art, or to advance progress or improvement in any line, all who desire to lessen crime, to help in the great work of teaching adult illiterates, both male and female, to read and write and spell and to encourage them to seek knowledge and to add to their acquirements through moonlight schools in illuminated school houses where education is as free as the air we breathe, and where all may come to edify themselves and to drink of the water of life freely.

In testimony whereof, I have caused these letters to be made patent and the seal of the Commonwealth to be hereunto affixed. Done at Frankfort the 21st day of Septem-

ber, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, and in the one hundred and twenty-third year of the commonwealth.

JAMES B. MCCREARY,
Governor.
C. E. CRECELIUS,
Secretary of State.
(Seal)
CECIL H. VANSANT,
Assistant Secretary of State.

The United States Bureau of Education, at this time, made Kentucky's campaign against illiteracy the occasion for a second notice to the public. In this bulletin, which was headed "Kentucky Wars on Illiteracy," the Commissioner of Education said:

> It will be a part of the lasting glory of the State of Kentucky that it has taken the lead in this movement. It is the first state to offer to all the people, of whatever age, an opportunity to learn to read and write, and thus break away from the prison wall of sense and silence within which the illiterate man and woman must live. Whatever else Governor James B. McCreary

may do for his State, this proclamation and his recommendation to the legislature that it provide for the appointment of an Illiteracy Commission must always be accounted among his wisest and most important acts.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FIRST TEXT-BOOKS FOR ADULT ILLITERATES

Attractive and easy texts and school supplies for adults which would enable them to learn quickly and would stimulate them to further endeavor was a manifest need. The little newspaper had been valuable for a county campaign, but was not so easy to carry out for the State, with its varying conditions and its remote sections to be reached.

Someone had to provide the tools with which these men and women could dig their way out of the mental dungeon in which they were imprisoned. A reader was prepared for them and brought out as quickly as possible. The first lesson was:

Can you read?
Can you write?
Can you read and write?
I can read.
I can write.
I can read and write.

This lesson contained but six words. It appealed to the ego, referring as it did to the student himself, and related to the activity in which he was, at the moment, engaged.

As the lessons progressed, farm improvement, good roads, civics, health, home economics, horticulture, sanitation and thrift were woven into them, and each lesson accomplished a double purpose, the primary one of teaching the pupil to read, and at the same time that of imparting instruction in the things that vitally affected him in his daily life. It was a correlation of subjects which, in adult education is even more necessary than in that of the child.

The lessons on the road, placed side by side, compared the advantage of the good and the disadvantage of the bad roads. The first was:

This is a road.
It is a good road.
It will save my time.
It will save my team.
It will save my wagon.
The good road is my friend.
I will work for the good road.

On the opposite page appeared this lesson:

See this bad road.
It will waste my time.
It will hurt my team.
It will hurt my wagon.
The bad road is my foe.
I will get rid of the bad road.

The key-note sentence in each lesson appeared in script form at the bottom of the page and was to be copied by each student a number of times.

When a man has repeatedly written the sentence: "The good road is my friend. I will work for the good road," and "The bad road is my foe. I will get rid of the bad road," he becomes something of an advocate of good roads through suggestion, if through nothing else. The copying of the script sentences in the book pledged the student to progress and impressed upon him certain evils with fine psychological effect. In the reading lessons on voting, the key-note sentence to be copied was: "The man who sells his vote sells his honor."

This type of copy which was carried throughout the book had, like the reading lessons, a double purpose; the necessary practice in writing and the dwelling on and emphasizing of some vital truth. These took the place of the axioms commonly used in the copy-books for day schools. Instead of writing, "Many men of many minds, Many men of many kinds," these folk wrote, "I will build a silo," "I will rotate my crops," "It is a waste of time and money to raise scrub stock," "We must protect the forest," "I will take a newspaper and read it," "I will keep my money in the bank."

Taxation is the cause of much unintelligent complaint, and some enlightenment on the subject seemed worth while. One lesson read:

I shall pay my taxes.
I pay a tax on my home.
I pay a tax on my land.
I pay a tax on my cattle.
I pay a tax on my money.
I pay a tax on many other things.
Where does all this money go?

It goes to keep up the schools.
It goes to keep up the roads.
It goes to keep down crime.
It goes to keep down disease.
I am glad that I have a home to pay taxes on.

The climax of this lesson was truly as much a surprise to the readers as any fiction. As they read of the many things on which they paid taxes and the query, "Where does all this money go?" they expected denunciation to follow, such as the demagogues revel in to confuse and inflame the minds of ignorant voters. Instead they found a reminder and an explanation of the benefits derived from wise and just taxation.

One page in the reader was consecrated to the tooth-brush, which was pictured at the top in all its pristine beauty. This lesson was as necessary in some places as the fire-drill is in the city schools.

One of our field workers had found on her visits to the different homes in a certain county that brushing her teeth was a performance

viewed with wonder, and one that never failed to draw a crowd. At one place where the children of the household gathered round watching this performance one little girl let her curiosity get the better of her and called to her mother indoors, "Mother, what's she adoin'?"

The mother answered in a humiliated tone, "Oh, hush, honey, she's a brushin' her teeth. When you git to be a school teacher you kin brush yours."

The farmers were partial to the lessons on conservation of the soil such as, "Run and tell the farmer that the brook is stealing his soil"; the lumberman preferred the one on keeping down the forest fires, and so the different lessons appealed to different students. I had occasion to note their preferences when at the reading contests in various counties each student was permitted to choose the lesson that he would read.

In Cumberland County in a contest among the pupils of the colored moonlight schools, "Uncle Ike," a great character among them, was given

the honor of being the first to read. He mounted the platform with book open in hand and began the reading of a selection which seemed very appropriate.

I will take my bath every day.
It will keep me fresh and sweet and clean.

In Clay County, another of the mountain counties, a large crowd of men and women gathered for a contest. Among them was a tall, lank, under-nourished man, who rose and with a look at his wife that carried indictment read this lesson with peculiar emphasis:

God made man.
Woman makes bread.
It takes the bread
That woman makes,
To sustain the man
That God made.
But the bread
That some women make.
Would not sustain any man
That God ever made.

In the same contest a little woman with a baby in her arms rose to read and in a gracious

manner worthy of a Frenchwoman said, "This is my favorite lesson," and read the author's letter to the pupils of the moonlight schools:

Frankfort, Ky.
Nov. 5, 1915.

DEAR FRIENDS:

This little book was written especially for the dear boys and girls of the moonlight schools, not the youngest perhaps, but the finest school children on earth.

You have set a fine example for both young and old, and one which many will surely follow.

You have been faithful and have finished the first of the series of the Country Life Readers. The second is now ready for you, and the author hopes that you will read it with profit and pleasure.

The world has great need of men and women who read well and write well. These are two of the greatest arts, and remember that they can be acquired only by constant practice.

The preparation of this book has been truly a labor of love. If you have received any benefit from it, the author is fully repaid.

Yours sincerely,
CORA WILSON STEWART.

This reader, known as the *Country Life Reader, First Book,* was followed by others in the series, but none could do for the illiterates what this first book did for them, and none to them would ever be so precious.

The reader ended, as did the later ones, with appropriate Bible selections. The climax of each book was a Thanksgiving hymn.

The Moonlight School Tablets in their outer appearance were blue with red binding, the identical color scheme of the old "blue-back speller," which, to my mind, was one of the things that made that book so popular. Its cover of heavenly blue with the rich contrasting binding of scarlet prepossessed many a beginner in its favor before they had even opened the book and peeped inside.

The tablet contained, first, a white sheet of blotting paper into which the name of the student was to be written in indented letters a number of times, that his first writing exercise might be his name, the thing which he craved most to learn. Next, there were sheets of del-

icate pink, violet, yellow and green blotting papers filled with sunken letters which the students traced in grooves to gain form quickly, having already acquired facility of movement in their daily duties, by constant use of fingers for manual work. In this respect they had the advantage of the child who must learn movement as well as form, from the start.

These colored sheets with their sunken letters that kept the pencil in grooves while writing had a remarkable fascination for these people, many of whose lives were devoid of color and interest. Tracing in the grooves permitted of no awkward or straggling letters, and this was most encouraging to them. The remainder of this beginner's tablet was composed of plain, smooth paper, widely spaced, on which they wrote the script copies from the *Country Life Reader*.

On their pencils was printed the slogan of the Illiteracy Campaign, so even these were useful for more than one purpose. One woman wrote, "I've read everything in my book and even what's printed on my pencil."

The moonlight schools have many lessons to teach besides reading and writing. Their message is broad and deep and high. What they teach is fittingly expressed in this poem of L. H. Bailey's:

I teach
The earth and soil
To them that toil;
The hill and fen
To common men
Who live right here.

The plants that grow,
The winds that blow,
The streams that run,
In rain and sun,
Throughout the year.

And then I lead
Through wood and mead,
Through mold and sod,
Out unto God,
With love and cheer,
I teach!

Charley Ky Dec 16/1919

Mrs. Cara Wilson Stewart

Frankfort. Ky.

Dear mrs stewart.

I am a farmer and I am learning
to read and write I am anxious
to learn arithmetic. This
is my third lesson
Miss audrey chapman
is my teacher
I am glad to learn to
read and write

Truly yours
Robert Miller

Dear Mrs Stewart.
I am Robert brother
We are both learning
Truly yours
Levi Miller

LETTER WRITTEN AFTER THREE LESSONS

Carrollton Oct 21, 1914

Mrs Cora W. Stewart
Frankfort.

My Dear Mrs. Stewart
I wish to thank you for the Moonlight Schools. I have been going six nights and have learned to read and write. I am forty three years old and have written my first letter to my mother, the next to you. I have enjoyed coming to school and have learned many things I never thought I would know.
Again I thank you and our Carrollton teachers.

Yours.
Amanda McKinney

**LETTER WRITTEN AFTER SIX LESSONS**

Rocky Hill Sta Ky

Nov 12 1915

Mrs Cora Wilson Stewart.

Frankfort Ky

Dear Mrs Stewart

We are having a moonlight school at Rocky Hill our school begun Sept 8 1915. I did not know all the alphabet when I started to school. I have learned them all and can read and write a little

I have read the first book most through and I would be glad to have the second book. I am fifty five years old. I did not have the chance to go to school when I was a boy I never heard of the moonlight school untill last fall I think it is the grandest thing in the world. when Mr Ray and Miss Smith begin

talking about teaching I begin
to get ready to go and have
gone every night. I am going
to keep up my studies untill
I can read the bible for
my self as this is my first
letter that I have been able
to write I will close
for this time.

yours sincerely
E. F. Rigsby.

**LETTER FROM PUPIL AFTER ATTENDING FULL SESSION OF MOONLIGHT SCHOOL**

## CHAPTER X

### MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS IN WAR TIME

In the spring of 1917 the War came and the illiterates faced new problems. Illiterate boys were swept, along with others, into the army. Hitherto they had been barred from army service, but now the War Department removed this restriction and let them in.

The first registration for army service was for men from 21 to 31 years of age, and took place on June 5, 1917. The Kentucky Illiteracy Commission immediately turned its attention to illiterate soldiers and concentrated its energies on helping to win the War. In three weeks' time the names and addresses had been secured of all those in the various counties who had registered by mark. The moonlight schools were not scheduled to open until late in August, but a special session was opened for these illit-

erate soldiers that they might learn to read and write before they were sent to camp. This call was sent out to the teachers through the press of the State:

To The Teachers of Kentucky:

An unusual situation confronts those engaged in teaching in this State. It is one which will put to the test your patriotism and your devotion to education, as well.

30,000 young men in Kentucky signed their registration cards on June 5th by mark, being unable to sign their names. These are not confined to any locality, but are scattered throughout every county in the State. They are not colored, but mainly white.

These figures must stagger every thoughtful Kentuckian. They would shame us to the point of concealment, but for the need of these young men for immediate relief. Concealment works no cure. Only prompt and decisive action can do that.

These young men are not to blame for their misfortune. The enlightened citizens of Kentucky, who have tolerated lax compulsory attendance laws, and have submitted to the non-enforcement of such school attendance laws as are on our statute books,

are mostly to blame. But there is no time to waste in crying "shame" or in fixing the blame. This is a time to atone in such measure as we may.

It is unfair that these young men should be torn from their homes and dear ones and sent across the water to fight your battles and mine without being able to read a letter or to write a line back home. Next to actual engagement in battle, the most momentous event in the life of a soldier is the arrival of a letter from home. To his anxious mother a letter from her soldier boy is a comfort above price. No third person, however willing, can convey the sentiments and secrets of these two to each other.

The Y. M. C. A. provides an abundance of reading and writing material, but these boys can only gaze upon it hungrily as a thing they crave to use, but cannot. Such printed reminders, posted about the Y. M. C. A. camp, as "Write home," "Have you written to mother today?" are unintelligible to them.

A Committee hands to each boy a pocket testament as he passes through the port of New York to embark for the war zone. 30,000 Kentucky boys can get no comfort from the Bible, even when it is given to them.

These young men may be called into camp September 1st. Beginning July 23rd, we can give them a six weeks elementary course in the moonlight schools, such as will enable them to read and write their own letters, and to peruse elementary books and to read most items in the newspapers. Such as cannot attend the moonlight schools can be taught individually at home. Public school teachers, who are already in their schools have the best opportunity. Every one of these I am sure will gladly serve, but in counties where the schools are not in session and where the teacher is not on the ground, former teachers and educated citizens can start night classes in the public school-houses.

There may have been a time when these young men were sensitive about this affliction, or when they were indifferent, but that time is past. It is an hour of crisis with them, and they will be seeking teachers as earnestly as teachers could, possibly, seek them.

It is the duty of every public school teacher in Kentucky to volunteer. Some have already done so on the mere suggestion of such a call. Some even who are not teachers have volunteered. It is a high privilege to render to these unfortunate ones and to our State and Nation this

service. We may have been unable to invest in Liberty Loan Bonds. It may not be ours to follow the boys to France to minister to them under the Red Cross, but we can add to their comfort, their self-respect and efficiency by giving them this training before they go.

SHALL KENTUCKY SEND THIRTY THOUSAND ILLITERATES TO FRANCE? God forbid! Why should she send any? Hasn't she an Illiteracy Commission, 11,000 public school teachers and as patriotic people as ever the sun shone on? To the guns, yes, every man of them—even though with their affliction they might well be exempt from military duty, I believe—but to the books first, and then they'll go to the guns more content and with less embarrassment and less handicap.

Let the lights burn for the soldier boys on the evening of July 23rd in every rural, village and city school-house in the State! Write or wire that you will volunteer and let us provide you with books and plans.

Yours sincerely,
CORA WILSON STEWART,
President Kentucky Illiteracy Commission.
Frankfort, Ky.

Those who had attended the moonlight schools had always been provided with free books, both as an inducement and as a provision to insure success. Certainly the same generous treatment must be accorded the soldier students.

A campaign for funds was organized, and in keeping with the spirit of the times this was military in form. Eleven men of prominence from the eleven congressional districts in the state were summoned to Louisville to take the lead and the responsibility in the campaign to provide illiterate soldiers with books. Not one refused. Leaving their law offices, the courts, their banks and corporations they came. They became the eleven division commanders, and with their county captains, precinct lieutenants and numerous faithful privates, made the speediest finance campaign on record, and carried their part of the enterprise through with success.

Teachers volunteered faster than we could assign and equip them. Some were out of the state, it being their vacation time, and from

their retreats up in the mountains, on the lakes and even from Canada they came hurrying home.

New text-books were written to meet the need and to partake of the spirit of the times. The peaceful lessons on building roads, spraying fruit trees, rotating crops and conserving soil were not for men like these who were putting such things behind them. Theirs must be lessons martial in tone, so some were prepared centering around "men and guns, flags, camps, tents, kaisers and kings." To make their training as much an inspiration as possible their books and school supplies were given the appearance of war. Their covers were gay in patriotic colors, even the pencils being in red, white and blue. A soldier with his gun was the cover design, and he appeared in all his glory, wreathed about with a border of flags. *The Soldier's First Book* and *Soldier's Tablet* were the names given to their readers and writing books.

Brave though our countrymen are, there is no question but that many an American boy was hesitant in the early days of the War about going to fight on foreign soil. The first lesson in the *Soldier's First Book* had in it a trace of psychology, as well as a content through which men were supposed to master timely words and sentences:

I go.
I go to war.
Do you go?
Do you go to war?
Yes, I go to war.
Yes, we go to war.

There was considerable debate at first as to the part which the United States should play in the War, some believing that her remoteness from the theatre of action would practically prohibit her sending anything but money, munitions and food. "The man with the hoe" was acclaimed a patriot, so a lesson that delicately

suggested a preference for the gun was produced:

The war is on.
Some will fight with gun.
Some will fight with hoe.
All will fight with gun or hoe.
I will fight with gun.
You may fight with hoe.

To inspire something of enthusiasm for the approaching life in camp, about which there were many rumors, some distressing and some vague, this lesson was prepared:

Is this the camp?
Yes, this is the camp.
See the flag!
See the tents!
See the men!
See the guns!
This is fine!

The wisdom and justice of our nation's course was being disputed in those early days before sentiment for the War had crystallized, and the first reasons ever given some of the fighting

men for our being at war with Germany were learned in a simple lesson like this in the moonlight schools:

Why are we at war?
To keep our country free.
To keep other peoples free.
To make the world safe to live in.
To stop the rule of kings.
To put an end to war.

The purpose of the next lesson is obvious:

See the flag!
It is our flag!
Our flag never knew defeat!
Why did our flag never know defeat?
Because our flag has always stood for right.

Camp life with its crowds and complexities would need some introduction to them, especially the features which would immediately affect them. Each man would have an early interest in the orders of the day, posted up around the

camp on bulletin boards, so this lesson referring to their duties was thought applicable.

Let us read this.
What is it?
It is the bulletin board.
What is it about?
It tells when one is on detail.
What is that?
It is one's duty for the day.
Am I on duty today?
Yes, you are on guard duty.
Are you on?
Yes, I am on kitchen police.

Undoubtedly, there would be situations in camp requiring a sense of humor. A lesson which prepared them somewhat for the blunders and jests of their rookie days was this:

Let us play a joke on a rookie.
All right, what shall it be?
Send him after a key.
A key to what?
A key to the parade ground.
Would that be a joke?
Can't you see it?
No, I cannot.
Did you ever see a key to a field?
No, I see. The joke is on me.

On the hot summer evenings of July and August, 1917, Kentucky boys, subject to army service, wended their way to the moonlight schools. These men had a new and powerful incentive. Many of them had never known a week's absence from home, and some had journeyed no farther away than the county seat, to return to their own roof-trees at night. They now faced separation from all who were dear, separation by a distance of three thousand miles, and in a situation of constant danger which would stir every emotion of the heart and demand some connection with the ones at home. Their extremity was great, and they realized it. This was evident by the numbers that came, the grim determination with which they attacked their books and their unconcealed joy over a simple lesson learned. Their teachers had a feeling of tenderness toward them and a desire to help them that amounted to exaltation equal to that, no doubt, felt by any who served and sacrificed during the War. Knowledge was never so glorified as it

was those nights in the moonlight schools, when the soldiers clutched at it as hungry men for bread and the teachers bestowed it as manna with heavenly grace.

New speed records were made in the time required to learn to read and write. The men in the first draft who had missed the moonlight schools were met by teachers at the station where they entrained and rendered "first aid" in reading and writing for a day or an hour as the time would permit. It was in one of these first-aid classes that the champion record was made. A bridegroom, torn from the arms of his bride whom he had married but the day before, sought to learn in one day's time that he might write a love letter back to her. Not the next week nor on the morrow did he desire to write her, but it must be done that very day. According to the poet,

> Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
> Some banished lover or some captive maid.

so surely it would not fail him now. From

early morning until his train left that night he strove to master script, and not in vain. Before his train left, he wrote the letter, beginning it "Dear Darling," and his exultant joy must have been equalled by her happiness and surprise when the letter arrived.

In spite of the vigorous campaign waged, some were missed, and it was no uncommon thing during the late summer of 1917 for men to be arrested for their failure to register and brought before Federal officials. It was then disclosed that they were illiterate and did not know of the registration or the draft, and some of them did not even know that the country was at war. This added to the expense of the Government and to the burdens and annoyance of officials, but these were nothing in comparison with the humiliation and the anguish suffered by the innocent victims and their families at home.

The exemption boards found difficulty in testing the eyes of illiterate soldiers. No provision having been made they invented devices of their

Oct 11 1917
Hopkinsville, Ky

mrs cora wilson stewart

I will write you this letter to your school
our moonlight school & how learned to write
and read for which I would not take any
thing in the world for I can read the
Bible and the papers our moonlight
school taught by mr J E Hackman
is a grate benefit to our district
I am in the draft and ex pect
to be called to the colors any
time, and I am so glad I can read
and write sincerly, Isaac Thompson

LETTER FROM MAN OF DRAFT AGE

own. Some boards substituted pictures for the lettered cards customarily used by oculists. Stalwart, finely developed men stood up before draft boards and answered questions like these: "Do you see this little dog or can you see best the larger dog above?" "Do you see the cat in this line best or the one below?"

A second and third session of the moonlight schools for illiterate soldiers followed the first. Nowhere else in America were illiterate registrants being taught. The camps were in process of construction. The time between the registration of soldiers and their encampment—some three months or more—could profitably have been employed by illiterates of draft age in every State in learning to read and write. The records revealed that there were 700,000 men between the ages of 21 and 31 in the United States who registered by mark.

Kentucky men entered Camp Taylor at Louisville with books in their hands and determination to learn burning in their hearts. Many of them had had a taste, at least, of knowledge,

and even when they had learned no more at the first aid stations than to write their names, had been provided with school supplies, pledged to continue their lessons, and placed under the instruction of some educated member of their group who promised to continue the teaching when they reached camp. In many cases they were accompanied by their moonlight school teachers, who had, themselves, been drafted out of their schools.

Some, in spite of all precautions, escaped the moonlight schools and entered camp illiterate. Soldiers from Indiana and Illinois were quartered at Camp Taylor, also, many of whom were unable to read and write. The experiences of illiterate soldiers at Camp Taylor were identical, no doubt, with those in all the other training camps. It was a story of humiliation, handicap and discouragement and in many cases black and bitter despair. Their utter bewilderment added to the difficulties of an already complex situation, and so reduced the efficiency of the company or the squad that their presence

was resented by some officers, who at every opportunity and upon the slightest pretext shifted the illiterates from their own to another company.

The tables in the Y. M. C. A. hut spread with sheets upon sheets of white paper and envelopes were to the illiterate soldiers as a feast to which they had not been bidden. One soldier approached another timidly at a Y. M. C. A. writing table and said, "Will you back a dozen envelopes for me to my mother, please?"

"Certainly," replied the other, "but why a dozen? Are you planning to write her every day? You must be a dutiful son."

"No, these are to last me a year," the soldier confessed. "I promised my mother that I'd get some envelopes backed and that once a month I'd slip a dollar bill in one and mail it to her and by that she'd know that I was still alive."

Some were too proud to confess their illiteracy or to ask for help, and their difficulties were multiplied. Some carried letters in their

pockets for days before they could overcome their pride sufficiently to ask someone to read them. One soldier was sent to the guard house for disobeying orders, and after he had served his sentence, it was disclosed that he had disobeyed his orders only because he could not read them.

Meanwhile, the moonlight schools and first aid classes were "leavening the whole," and an illiteracy campaign was finally in progress at Camp Taylor under government auspices, with the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission as the base of supplies. The war against illiteracy in this camp was the inspiration for others which soon followed its example. Camp Shelby at Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where Kentucky troops were being shifted from time to time, was the next to organize, and though no preparation had been made by the Government in the beginning for this educational emergency, the most pressing of the War, the need was being realized in every camp, and soon illiterate negroes were being taught at Camp Lee in Virginia, illiterate

foreigners at Camp Dix, New Jersey, and illiterates of every race and class in the other camps throughout the nation, and even overseas.

A Bible was presented to each American soldier by certain organizations as they embarked for France, and as the first troops began to move overseas, the President sent them this message:

To the Soldiers of the National Army:

You are undertaking a great duty. The heart of the whole country is with you. Everything that you do will be watched with the deepest interest and with the deepest solicitude not only by those near and dear to you, but by the whole nation besides. For this great war draws us all together, makes us all comrades and brothers, as all true Americans felt themselves to be when we first made good our national independence. The eyes of all the world will be upon you, because you are in some special sense the soldiers of freedom.

Let it be your pride, therefore, to show all men everywhere not only what good soldiers you are, but also what good men you are, keeping yourselves fit and straight in everything, and pure and clean through

and through. Let us set for ourselves a standard so high that it will be a glory to live up to it, and then let us live up to it and add a new laurel to the crown of America. My affectionate confidence goes with you in every battle and every test. God keep and guide you!

The White House,
Washington. WOODROW WILSON.

But, alas, there were many among them who could not read the Word of God or the President's benediction.

By the spring of 1918, America had many men overseas, and homesickness was reported to be acute, and in some cases even fatal among them. General Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, realized that there was something more essential in keeping up the morale of these boys than the socks, sweaters, candy and tobacco with which the American people showered them and so he issued this order to the women at home:

The women of America must regard themselves as thoroughly militarized. They

must consider themselves as real soldiers and take orders from their officers here and obey them without question. Any woman who has a husband, brother, sweetheart, or relative in foreign service should write, write, write long, cheerful letters telling everything that happens in the old home town. The men are hungry for news and the things which seem like trivial happenings at home will be of the greatest interest to the men.

The order which I would send to the women of America is to work and write.

All who returned from the War Zone, lecturers, propagandists and others, brought the same message—"The boys need letters, letters; write, write, write." The sad news came of boys dying of homesickness in the army overseas. It was not indifference or negligence on the part of the soldiers' families that caused them to withhold letters, but in many cases it was the inability to write.

Here was a work for the moonlight schools scarcely less urgent than that of teaching the boys themselves, so sessions were begun for the wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts of

soldiers, and for the men over thirty-one who were subject to the next draft. The main purpose of these sessions was to teach those who enrolled to write to the boys in France, so they came with that expectation and all the training was to that end. Not only were they taught as quickly as possible to write letters, but they were instructed as to the kind to write and the sort to withhold. Letters such as "Mrs. Wiggs" and "Pollyanna" would write—radiating enthusiasm and cheer, were placed, for comparison, on the blackboard beside one of exaggerated woes, which rendered the latter so absurd that none would care to even faintly imitate it.

Boys in France wrote joyfully on receipt of these letters. The fact that they were written by those who were illiterate when they left home gave them a happy surprise. One boy wrote, and his was a typical letter.

> You couldn't imagine how pleased I was to get a letter from my dear mother. Ma I wouldn't take the world for that letter. You certainly did well. I could read your letter a whole lot better than I could Pa's.

A war course of study was prepared and issued for use in these sessions. The drills of peace time gave way to the more pressing ones of food conservation, the Red Cross, Liberty Loans and lessons on the history of the War and the geography of the warring countries, all of which were designed to bring isolated people into co-operation with the agencies that were striving to win the War.

The *Soldier's First Book* was revised and elaborated and contributed to the Y. M. C. A., the educational arm of the Government, for publication by their press and for use in the camps. It was turned over to them on the one condition that it be provided to every illiterate soldier free, as had been done in Kentucky, in the early days of the War.

By the fall of 1918 an elaborate educational program had been mapped out by the Government and was being applied in places, but the signing of the Armistice called for a complete reversal of these plans, and for a program that would quickly turn the minds of the men to the

things of peace and reconstruction. The plans were immediately shifted, and the Government sent 50,000 *Country Life Readers* overseas for illiterate soldiers detained on foreign soil. The lessons on the clean ballot, just taxation, soil conservation and cultivation, good roads and the prevention of disease were all part of the reconstruction program, which would require no less courage, energy and patriotism than even the War itself.

It is a far cry from the school-houses of Kentucky to the army occupation camps in Germany, but the moonlight schools had trailed the illiterate soldier through the camps, across the seas, through England and France to the army of occupation on the Rhine. Letters came from many soldiers. This one from a lieutenant in the army—a Kentucky boy—was the last received and made a fitting close to the part the moonlight schools had played in the War:

DEAR MRS. STEWART:

I suppose it will come somewhat as a surprise to learn that we are conducting

moonlight schools according to your plans in far-off Germany. I'm now on outpost duty, and your book is in use in the point furthermost from Coblenz in the American area. Six months ago I don't suppose many people expected the moonlight school movement to reach beyond the Rhine.

I have a fine class, mostly Italians. They're all anxious to learn, and I get as much pleasure from teaching as I did when I opened the first moonlight school in Camp Shelby. I wrote you about that.

The teaching of illiterates is being carried on throughout our division, and I suppose in other units also. We keep records of their work and submit reports from time to time in the same manner that other work is being done in the army.

Good luck to the moonlight schools and I hope that every American boy when he returns from overseas will be able to read and write.

## CHAPTER XI

### MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS IN RECONSTRUCTION DAYS

Soldiers returned from France talking education, urging a better school system, and a provision for everybody, young and old, to improve themselves. It was the burden of almost every soldier's heart. Alvin York, acclaimed the greatest hero of the World War because of his remarkable feat of capturing 132 Germans single handed, came home and started raising money to build a school for the people of his native hills, and Sergeant Sandlin, the Kentucky mountaineer, whose record as a war hero was second only to that of York, returned to Kentucky, and, enlisting under the Illiteracy Commission, joined in the illiteracy crusade. None who listened to York's earnest plea for the people of the mountains of Tennessee, or heard Sandlin tell of the army commissions offered him in France which, because of his limited edu-

cation he could not accept, will forget the crude but eloquent appeal they made. Like other soldiers returned from overseas, they came back preaching the gospel of education. It was a universal feeling among soldiers of the Allies, even of those from India, a country where few women are taught to read and write. The illiterate soldier in Kipling's story, "Eyes of Asia," dictated this letter to be written home from France. "We must cause our children to be educated in the future. This is the opinion of all the regiment, for by education even women accomplish marvels, like the women of Franceville. Get the boys and girls taught to read and write well. Here teaching is done by government order."

Most of the boys who came back wanted to enter school themselves. Theirs was a new dignity, as veterans of the War, and their illiteracy was more humiliating to them and more shocking to the spectator than before. To those who possessed some education, the colleges and universities opened wide their doors, but the

illiterate and near-illiterate boys were subjects for the kindly ministrations of the moonlight schools.

Girls who had offered their services for patriotic duty of various kinds during the War and had been rejected because of their limited education, had not gone home to content themselves with their lot, but the rude awakening to their condition had sent them seeking opportunities to learn. Middle-aged men and women and older ones whose illiteracy had been revealed to them during the War in all its ugliness were nursing a divine discontent. These were ready, as never before, for school.

There was another reason for educating the illiterates which might well have been considered urgent from the Government's point of view. The unrest following the War and the spread of radicalism, made a situation scarcely less critical than the War itself. The propaganda of these discontented ones found in the mass of illiterates, native and foreign-born, its most fertile soil. The day schools would instill

Elizabethtown, Ky.,

Sept. 30, 1919

Mrs Cora Wilson Stewart,

Frankfort, Ky.,

Dear Mrs Stewart,

I have been attending moon light school two weeks I have learned to read and write I am twenty-four years old. I was in France six-teen months and could not write home. I am glad that I have a chance

to learn to read and write. miss mildred
I milk is my teacher.
I have read eleven lessons in my
reader and can add and subtract some
I work on the farm every day,

your friend,
Ira Cundiff

LETTER FROM A WAR VETERAN

their lessons of loyalty and patriotism, but the crisis to be met was one of the immediate future, and would be decided, not by the children, but by the adults.

Reconstruction gave a new motive and a new urge to the moonlight schools. There was much besides reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic to be taught in those days, and an unusual opportunity for correlation of those subjects with timely ones. There was the habit of waste and extravagance to be corrected, and the Nation's war debt to be paid, which called for training in thrift, and intensive training at that; there were forests to be conserved, soil to be reclaimed; loyalty to the country to be instilled, the "Own your own home" movement to be emphasized, the better use of the English language to be secured, a higher appreciation developed of the benefits of American citizenship, disease to be stamped out and human life conserved. After the most destructive war in history all of these had their claim to importance in any school curriculum and in the one

for adults could not be ignored. They had their place in the reconstruction course of study for the moonlight schools. They were taught in the reading, writing and composition lessons and in the drills.

The cover of the new course of study told its own story of what the moonlight schools would try to do in reconstruction days. The schoolhouse pictured there in the moonlight with many roads running from it, with signboards pointing to "Education," "Sanitation," and "Health," "Good Roads," "Thrift," "Better Speech" and "Better Citizenship," would undertake, wherever it could spread its light, to meet the emergency which followed the War.

As the moonlight school session started the Governor of Kentucky issued this message:

> While the countries of Europe rebuild their ruined cities and rehabilitate their industries, it is our privilege in the United States to rehabilitate the lives of our fellow citizens. One of the most necessary and most noble of reconstruction tasks is to teach all those who are unable to read and

write. We must do this before the commonwealth and the nation can make great advancement.

The teachers and citizens of Kentucky are pioneers in the movement, which has now become nation-wide and has even been adopted in other countries. The movement which they have so unselfishly fostered demands the best that is in us all at this time when the last battle in the crusade against illiteracy in Kentucky is being waged.

I honor the moonlight school teachers and set a high value upon the service which they are volunteering to render to humanity and to the state. May that service enrich their own lives as much as it will their fellow-men and the great commonwealth of Kentucky.

JAMES D. BLACK,
Governor.

The moonlight school teachers were aided and supervised by the county illiteracy agents. These field forces had gradually increased in number since the first experiment was tried out with them in three mountain counties in 1915.

Kentucky meanwhile had made two appropriations, $10,000 in 1916, and this had been increased to $75,000 in 1918. The field agents of the Illiteracy Commission now numbered seventy-five. An institute was held for these county agents at the State Capitol, where they were gathered for training at the state's expense. After a week's deliberation and discussion of the problem of illiteracy and the methods of attack, they went into the field with an enthusiasm that was contagious and well-nigh irresistible. These county agents were men and women of professional training and high attainments. Many of them were college and university graduates. They were practically volunteers, their salaries being only about sufficient to cover their traveling expenses. What the teacher attempted in her district, they attempted in the county in a larger way. The story of the campaign made by these agents, their daily and nightly travel on horseback or afoot, their valiant efforts to reach illiterates, their ready arguments, their tact and diplomacy,

their enthusiasm and pluck would fill a volume in itself. The spirit of these leaders and the scope of their operations are revealed in the following report of a young woman who was one of this corps of earnest workers:

I am sending you the final report of the work done in Pulaski County.

First, I desire to thank the Illiteracy Commission for extending me the privilege of serving the best cause in Kentucky, the effort to teach the illiterates, the most unfortunate people in the world, and to prevent illiteracy by enforcing the compulsory attendance law.

I am happy to report forty-eight moonlight schools organized and two hundred and fifty illiterates taught to read and write. Besides this, one hundred or more are being taught at home.

The people have shown a co-operative spirit and in many districts volunteered to teach in the moonlight schools. They are anxious to have this curse erased, as they realize it is a menace and prevents progress in every community where it exists.

The illiteracy work has had excellent results, many too numerous to mention, but,

First. It has shown the need of a new educational system where the unfortunates

can be given a chance to learn and advance.

Second. It has increased community spirit, and a willingness to co-operate in any progressive movement.

Third. It has increased day school attendance by a large percent. School reports show an increase of twenty percent.

Fourth. Last, but not least, to those taught it means better sanitation and living conditions, better citizens to Pulaski County and the State of Kentucky.

The state had been districted and seven district agents were put in charge. These went from county to county aiding and spurring the county agents and organizing every class and group of citizens to co-operate. Among these seven were four war veterans just returned from France—three war heroes and a Red Cross nurse. The other three were veterans no less, for they had served for years in that great defense line—the public schools of the state. One page from their "Day by Day" Books with its record of conferences and meetings held, the calls on school people, editors, ministers, bankers, club women, public officials, fraternal or-

ganizations and commercial bodies would show something of their activities, but no mere record of daily duties could set forth the spirit of patriotism that animated them or the zeal with which they labored day and night.

This was a time for the rehabilitation of lives, as Governor Black had said in his message, and those misguided men and women who had chosen error's way and were paying the penalty within prison walls could not be overlooked. Teaching prisoners began in the early days of the illiteracy crusade, but in this time of reconstruction, this part of the work was strengthened and extended. Often the teaching was done by the jailer and his wife, sometimes it was done by the jailer's school-teacher daughter, sometimes it was by some other member of the official family, frequently the county school superintendent.

At one time classes and individuals were learning in about a hundred jails, and the letters that came out of these schools were filled with mingled gratitude and regret—gratitude for the

belated chance and regret that it had not come sooner, when it might possibly have diverted them from the mistaken course which led them into prison walls.

The moonlight schools in the state reformatory and penitentiary found a rare opportunity. Here illiteracy was grouped. Hundreds of men had made their mark on the prison record and many had signed their names in scrawling, illegible letters but could do no more in the way of writing. Some of these had but a year or two to serve. They would soon go forth into their communities and whatever education they might acquire would doubtless serve as a deterrent from future crime and as an inspiration toward some worth-while achievement. These illiterates were easy to reach, for most of them preferred an evening in class to one spent in the cell. However, for those who might be indifferent, a spur was provided in this resolution passed by the State Prison Board:

> WHEREAS, Kentucky is now engaged in an effort to stamp illiteracy out of the

> state, and INASMUCH, as instructors and facilities for teaching are now furnished the inmates of penal institutions under the control of this Board, and all are given the opportunity to read and write, it is therefore ordered by the State Board of Control, that one of the essential prerequisites to a parole should be that a prisoner shall be able to read and write, and the Board therefore adopts the rule that hereafter all inmates shall be able to read and write, before their application for parole will be considered.

This act making the prisoner's ability to read and write a condition of parole, proved a great incentive to the illiterates to learn.

Some of the prisoners when their terms expired went back home and became educational evangelists in their communities. It was said of one man who had returned from the State reformatory and joined in the illiteracy crusade, "He talks like one who had returned from a university rather than from the 'pen.' "

His conversation was all of teachers, schools, books and "everybody learning to read and write."

The Warden of the Kentucky State Reforma-

tory in his report at the close of 1919 made the following statement:

> Many of our prisoners who were supposed to be able to read and write when they entered the institution were actually found to be illiterate. The total number taught to read and write during my three and a half years as Warden, is 1,300 as nearly as I can sum it up from the records. The improvement in the discipline of the men who learned to read and write was most noticeable. I gave the work my personal attention and feel that it was one of the most important duties of my office.

The Warden of the State Penitentiary reported to the Illiteracy Commission as follows:

> It will always be a greater source of gratification to me that nearly 1,400 adults have been taught to read and write during my seven and a half years as the head of this Institution than everything else I have accomplished. I will state that every prisoner is permitted to come out to the school session and we have all illiterates attending except a few very old ones whose eyesight is too defective, possibly five or six.

Name Fritz Pillow Cell No. 700.14a Clothing No. 2415 Grade 1

WHEN WRITING, PRISONERS MUST STRICTLY COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

FIRST GRADE PRISONERS may write ONE letter each on the 1st and 15th of month.
SECOND GRADE PRISONERS may write ONE letter each on the 15th of each month.
THIRD GRADE PRISONERS are not allowed to write or receive any mail, unless known as an exception.
First and Second Grade prisoners may receive all classes of mail and visitors on each month. Prisoners cannot receive cooked food or eatables of any kind.
Very important letters to Third Grade prisoners must be addressed to care of the Warden.

Do not send large envelopes of cardboards enclosed. Let your statement speak for your letter that GOOD CONDUCT will get him out earlier than anything else.
All outgoing letters must be written on this stationery and must not exceed two pages in length.
Prisoners are prohibited to write to their wives, children, brothers, sisters and parents only. Letters to others can be sent only by special permission of the Warden. DO NOT SEND MONEY IN LETTER.

T. M. PHYTHIAN, Warden.

FRANKFORT, KY. Jan 15 1919

my dear freind I take the greatest of pleasure in writing you a few lines to let know how I have learned to read and write I give my Joy to write and makes me glad to know how good it is to write my own letters not taken the opperlunity I nearly life I fell that reading and writen is the greatest thing in the world when I come here I could not iwrite my name but I go school tree nights in a week I hope when this reach you can make it out so I will say good Bye from

Fritz Pillow

LETTER FROM A STUDENT IN PRISON

According to these wardens' reports, 2,700 prisoners in the State Reformatory and Penitentiary had been redeemed from illiteracy during a period of seven years, an average of about 385 each year. The prisoners had been provided with free books, had been encouraged by the wardens and others in official life, even the Governor appearing on occasion to present them with the diplomas which were conferred for the completion of the course in these schools.

Many of these men, by their own confession, had gone wrong simply because they had had so little to fill their lives. In a class of beginners one evening, the men were requested to stand and tell why they had not secured an education. When all had finished, the story they told could have been summed up in these few words, "I never had no chance."

The illiteracy campaign was being waged for the removal of illiteracy which already existed but it was, also, creating sentiment for the prevention of illiteracy in the future. Those who

led the fight to remove illiteracy had never doubted that "it is better to build a fence around the precipice than to wait with the ambulance below," but so many had already gone over the precipice that in mercy's name they must be succored. The very act of rescue had attracted sufficient attention to the calamity, it was hoped, to insure the building of the fence—the creation of school attendance officers who would enforce the compulsory attendance law. The county illiteracy agents had been given permissive power by the Legislature of 1918 to act as attendance officers and had pioneered such a measure and created sentiment for regular attendance officers with full power. This sentiment must be crystallized before the approaching Legislature convened. To this end two thousand speakers went into the field to urge the people to their utmost efforts in teaching all to read and write and also to advocate two kindred educational reforms—the attendance officer as a preventive of another crop of illiterates, and a living wage for those who had "borne the

heat and burden" of the campaign—the public school teachers of the state. When the Legislature convened the following January the sentiment was overwhelmingly favorable and it was a mere matter of phrasing the laws, creating attendance officers and increasing teachers' salaries, which were promptly passed.

Kentucky in a few years time taught 130,000 to read and write. This record of the number taught is based on letters of pupils, who stated that they had learned, together with the reports of teachers and county superintendents. The names of the illiterates had been obtained from the United States Census Bureau early in the campaign to be used in locating them and checking off their names as they were taught. Though assured by the United States Commissioner of Education that these were records that would not be divulged, we had invaded the Census Bureau and secured the names of Rowan County's illiterates. It was only a step that led to the divulging of the names of all the illiterates in Kentucky, though some pressure had to be

put on before the complete record was obtained. It was the first time in history that the Census Bureau had ever been approached with such a request. The names of illiterates formed a record hitherto unavailable to the states. This Bureau has since been flooded with demands and some states have paid thousands of dollars to have the names of their illiterates copied. Kentucky had secured this information, not easily, but free of cost to the state and in so doing was carrying out the mandate of the Legislature which had charged the Commission "to make research, collect data and statistics and procure surveys of any and all communities, districts or vicinities of the state, looking to the obtaining of a more detailed, definite and particular knowledge as to the true conditions of the state with regard to its adult illiteracy."

Kentucky through an effective attendance officer law, one of the fruits of her illiteracy crusade, has secured herself against a recurrence of illiteracy in future. The thousands of illiterates she has redeemed have demonstrated both

their ability and their desire to learn. There lies before her the task of redeeming the others and of providing opportunities for the newly-learned to advance through, at least, the elementary grades. This will be done in time by following her crusade with the establishment of an extensive system of evening schools, with teachers paid and a State school for adults where those younger men and women who can leave home may complete their education quickly and enter upon intelligent and useful careers.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ILLITERACY CRUSADE SPREADS FROM STATE TO STATE

The crusade against illiteracy had extended rapidly to other states. Moonlight schools were organized in the fall of 1913 in Bradley County, Tennessee, to teach the mountaineers; in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, to teach the people in mill villages, and in Grant County, Washington, to teach some German farmers to read and write the English language.

Alabama was the second state to wage a statewide crusade against illiteracy. In 1914, Honorable William F. Feagin, State Superintendent of Education of Alabama, sent out this call:

> It is my opinion that there are a number of people in this state who are patriotic enough to give themselves over to the task

Grant Ala
aug 31 1920.

Supt. L. O. Creel.
Huntsville, Ala.

Dear Mr. Creel

I have learned
to read and write
in the moonlight
school and am going
to show my appreciation
for it by being a
good friend to
all the schools.

very truly yours
Luke Kirkland

LETTER FROM AN ALABAMA PUPIL

Grant ala,
aug 31 1920

Supt. C. O. Crill
Guntersville ala
Dear Sir, crill.
We are having
our moonlight schools
and I enjoy going
fine because I
am learning to be
a better and more
useful citizen
yours truly
John Tickes

LETTER FROM AN ALABAMA PUPIL

> of making a crusade against illiteracy in their communities, if we only knew how to find them. For such as these, this pamphlet is being sent out and in the belief that any soul who gives himself to a task like this, namely that of bringing light and help and cheer to those who have never learned to know the independence, the self-respect, the information and the delight of the printed page, is worthy of honorable mention whenever we call to mind those true patriots who serve humanity and glorify the state.

In 1915 the Alabama Illiteracy Commission, the second illiteracy commission in the world, was created and the Governor of Alabama issued a proclamation against illiteracy, which was, also, the second of its kind. The Alabama Illiteracy Commission was organized with former Governor William D. Jelks as Chairman and Honorable William F. Feagin as Secretary. With the slogan, "Illiteracy in Alabama—Let's remove it," this Commission began the task of extending to every illiterate in Alabama the opportunity of the moonlight schools.

Late in the year of 1914, Doctor J. Y. Joyner, State Superintendent of Public Instruction of

North Carolina, began to organize the forces for an illiteracy campaign in that state. What was accomplished in this initial campaign was reported by him to the editors of North Carolina assembled at Montreat, July 1, 1915, when he appeared before them to enlist them in a state-wide crusade against illiteracy. In summarizing the results he said:

> The moonlight schools have proved successful in dealing with this problem of adult illiteracy in other places, notably in Rowan County, Kentucky, where they were first inaugurated about three years ago. The story of the movement in that state is inspiring and the results have been marvelous. Largely as a result of the discussion of this subject at the annual meeting of the State Association of County Superintendents at the Teacher's Assembly last November eighty-two moonlight schools were conducted in twenty-nine counties in this state last year enrolling sixteen hundred illiterates of an average age of forty-five, most of whom learned to read and write.

Seven thousand North Carolina teachers volunteered the following year to teach moonlight

Coals NC

Jan 27th 1915

Dear Superintendent

I am glad to be able to write you this letter I am now 34 years old I attended the moon light school last year and am attending agin this time as you know from my last letter I cannot rite much but would not be back as I was for any thing the year I study my reading spling writting rithmetic we have in school 66 in our school and all is doing good work our Teachers are kind to us we we feel very yeatful to mrs Street to be so thoughtful about us boys yours with kindness

J H Cook

LETTER FROM A NORTH CAROLINA PUPIL

schools. At the close of the session Dr. Joyner wrote:

> A partial report from fifty of the one hundred counties show 638 moonlight schools with 5,530 illiterates enrolled, most of whom have been taught. It is safe to estimate that the reports from other counties will show at least 10,000 have been reached through the moonlight schools and taught to read and write.

When such reports were in as could be collected—and many schools known to be successful were never reported—9,698 illiterates had been taught. Doctor Joyner then rallied his forces for a more heroic effort with this warery:

> Outstrip Kentucky! What Kentucky has done and is doing North Carolina can and must do for the need is greater. Adult illiteracy in the United States is doomed. A few more years and there will not be a vestige of it left. Kentucky, led on by the spirit of inspiration of a woman, has preempted the first place in this glorious work. North Carolina may be second; indeed there is a chance that she may even outstrip

Kentucky and be the first to reach the coveted goal.

The North Carolina Legislature of 1917 appropriated $25,000 annually for moonlight schools and in 1919 the work was made a part of the public school system of the state.

Minnesota's first moonlight schools were organized in 1915 in response to a call from her State Superintendent of Education, Honorable C. G. Shulz, who, in October, 1914, issued this call through the press of the state:

> I hesitate to accept the figures on Minnesota's illiteracy. They would seem rather larger than we would expect even though at that they show Minnesota as being among the states having the least illiteracy. But, we have to recognize that there is some illiteracy here and the recognition carries with it the admission that there shouldn't be any. Minnesota should stamp out illiteracy absolutely.
>
> Mrs. Stewart's message to us makes this a fitting time to inaugurate a study of the subject here at home. I think that Minnesota's illiteracy is centred mainly in urban rather than in rural communities. School

A North Carolina Moonlight School.

heads would do well to make an immediate survey of their neighborhoods and to ascertain who the illiterates are and how to reach them.

Superintendent E. A. Freeman, of Itasca County, was the first of Mr. Shulz's lieutenants to respond. Mr. Freeman organized his teachers in November, 1914, and conducted moonlight schools for illiterates, mainly those of foreign birth. This pioneer work in Minnesota was the inspiration of the Naturalization Bureau which adopted the plan and promoted it in other localities. The Examiner of the Naturalization Bureau for Minnesota in one of his official bulletins said:

> The National Government Bureau of Naturalization is anxious to help the foreign-born to learn to read and write the English language and to better understand our form of government. In the rural districts where the need is greatest, little has been done, but Professor E. A. Freeman, of Itasca County, introduced an entering wedge last year in his schools and met with much success.

Oklahoma had several moonlight schools in 1914 through the influence of the Literacy League organized at the State Normal School at Edmond by Moses E. Wood, head of the Departments of Pedagogy and Psychology. In 1915 Honorable R. H. Wilson, State Superintendent of Education, launched a state-wide campaign in which he enlisted several thousand teachers besides organizing the press and the people of his state to aid. A sweeping campaign was made by Mr. Wilson and the patriotic men and women who enlisted with him. In an official report in 1916 Superintendent Wilson gave the results of the first year's work as follows:

> Probably more than five thousand persons were reached by the moonlight schools in Oklahoma during the school year 1915-16. This is indeed a good beginning. During the next school year 1916-17, we should reach 25,000 illiterates and as many adult literates. The black cloud of illiteracy can be dispelled by the united efforts of county superintendents and teachers. This is a call to service and an appeal to the state

**Oklahoma Moonlight School.**

[redacted], Oklahoma

Nov. 23, 1914

Dear Mr. Wilson—

I am a farmer 37 years old. I entered the Moonlight school here Oct. 4, 1914— At that time I was unable to read or write. I could not write my own checks. Now after attending these school for two months I am able to read and write. I have been greatly helped by what I have learned. I am a cattle man as well as a farmer and I am able to read the Stock papers and keep up with the Market. I am glad that I have had a chance to attend the Moonlight school.

Wishing you and the schools success, I am

yours friend

John Mutz

**LETTER TO THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, OKLAHOMA**

> pride of every teacher employed in our common schools. By concerted effort we can make Oklahoma the most literate state in the union.

Oklahoma was the first state whose normal schools offered credits for moonlight school work, an example followed by Kentucky and some of the other states.

"Illiteracy in New Mexico must go," was the slogan sounded by the school forces in New Mexico during 1915. Honorable Alvin N. White, State Superintendent of Education, inaugurated the campaign, and the slogan was caught up with enthusiasm by leaders throughout the state. This appeal was made by Superintendent White:

> The purpose of this is to call attention of the people of the state to the alarming and excessive percentage of illiteracy; to have the educated forces of the state realize more fully that illiteracy is a curse, a menace and a disgrace; that it must be destroyed and the state elevated; that by the united efforts of the teachers and citizens of the state everybody must read and write in New Mexico by 1920.

Santa Fé County, under the leadership of Superintendent John V. Conway, led the state. Superintendent Conway and his corps of teachers made the record of establishing a moonlight school in every district with 1,549 adults enrolled. This county had a large Mexican population, some of whom could read and write in Spanish, but came to the moonlight schools to learn to read and write English. The majority of Mexicans enrolled, however, were illiterate, and these were taught in English. The record of this pioneer county inspired the entire state and has been the foundation upon which New Mexico's work among adult illiterates has been built. It led to the enactment by the New Mexico Legislature of several laws, for the benefit of illiterate adults, one of them providing compensation for those who would teach a moonlight school with as many as ten illiterates enrolled.

The illiteracy crusade spirit was abroad in California and found concrete expression in 1915 when the State Department of Education,

A class of Mexican mothers in Cal ifornia learning to read and write.

San Ildefonso N Mex
Feb 11. 1914

Sr J P Conway Santa Fe N Mex

Dear Sir I hop you are ver
well when you see this few lines
we are all working here on this
moonlight shool the teacher told
me that ave both must writing
you a letter and I am not
enough to writing on Engls but
I make a try to learn and I was
learning so ver much and I gain
I am a good boy in arry night
we have ver good combats
and I was learning all kandy
lessons and I can not tell
all about for I can not writing
engls well and which is all
for this time
-your Boy Truly
Adolfo Gallegos age 21

**LETTER FROM NEW MEXICO MOONLIGHT SCHOOL**

the Immigration Commission and the California Federation of Women's Clubs jointly launched a state-wide campaign. The Federation announced its plans as follows:

> The Education Committee is asked to center its efforts upon the eradication of illiteracy and the Kentucky plan is recommended. The program is to vitalize the state into educational responsibility and activity in behalf of a considerable part of our population and to raise California to the first place in the literacy column.

California passed the "home teacher" law in the same year. The law provides an itinerant teacher to go from house to house and instruct illiterates and others. To this has been added other wise legislation in behalf of the illiterates, at the instance of Honorable Will C. Wood, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a comprehensive program for the elimination of illiteracy from California has been adopted and is being carried on under the State Department of Education. Los Angeles is one of the cities in the United States that has made

great progress in redeeming illiterates. Kate Douglas Wiggin wrote a story—"The Girl and the Kingdom"—and gave it to the teachers of this, her home city, to be sold and the money used to defray the expenses of the local illiteracy campaign.

The moonlight schools were begun in Georgia in 1915 under the leadership of Honorable M. L. Brittain, State Superintendent of Schools, who tells of its progress in the following report:

> The first notable instance of training illiterates under State auspices originated in Kentucky several years ago. The work attracted attention throughout the country and several states organized somewhat similar classes.
>
> As State Superintendent of Education, I called the attention of our Legislature to this subject four years ago, but met with no encouragement, the belief being expressed that these illiterate grown-ups could not be taught with any degree of success. To prove that this feeling was erroneous, our five state rural school supervisors were directed to see what could be

Glennville Ga
April 7 1916

Mr I D Smith
Reidsville Ga

Dear Mr Smith
I understand
that the Tattnall
Journal has been
Promised to every grown
Person who learns to
read and write well
enough to write to you
for it I have read
through my book several

times and can write
some I would be glad
to get the paper
my address is

W G Kickfighter
Glennville Ga

LETTER FROM A GEORGIA MOONLIGHT SCHOOL PUPIL

done with these classes and five counties were selected for the purpose. Very good results were obtained by these supervisors. The best work in the state, however, was accomplished by Mr. I. S. Smith, an educator, who was then Superintendent of Tattnall County schools, who had more than six hundred adults taught to read and write. Fortified with these facts and the proof that it could be done successfully, the Legislature was again requested to authorize the work and to give financial aid for its support.

In compliance with Mr. Brittain's request, the Georgia Legislature created an Illiteracy Commission in 1919. Governor Hugh Dorsey became the President and Mr. Brittain was made Secretary and Director of this Commission. Seven state organizers were employed, six white and one colored, and the five regular state school supervisors were directed to give much of their time to the illiteracy campaign.

In his official report of 1920 Mr. Brittain says:

Another 1919 law that reflects credit upon the legislature is that of teaching the illit-

erates. Our records show that we have, since August, enrolled 31,545 illiterates and taught 17,982 to read and write.

The State of Washington, under the leadership of Mrs. Josephine Corliss Preston, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, enacted a law in 1915 which enabled all school districts to have night schools. Finding that the illiteracy campaign was necessary to arouse the illiterates to their opportunity and the public to co-operate, an Illiteracy Commission has since been created with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction as Chairman and with members chosen from the various state organizations. This Commission has appointed county illiteracy commissions and is engaged in a campaign to remove illiteracy from the state.

The illiteracy movement, which was started in South Carolina in 1913 by Miss Julia Selden, a patriotic Southern woman, took the form of a crusade in Laurens and Newberry Counties in 1914 and blossomed into an Illiteracy Commission in 1916. The Legislature appropriated

$10,000 for the work in 1918 and increased the appropriation to $25,000 in 1910, when it became a branch of the State Department of Education, the Illiteracy Commission assuming the position of aid and ally. South Carolina, the first state to secede from the Union before the Civil War, chose as her slogan in the illiteracy crusade, "Let South Carolina secede from Illiteracy."

The Mississippi Legislature created an Illiteracy Commission in 1916 and began a statewide campaign with the slogan, "Illiteracy in Mississippi—Blot it out."

At the request of Governor Charles H. Brough, an Illiteracy Commission was created by the Arkansas Legislature in 1917. The expense of the illiteracy crusade in that state was met, at first, by the bankers, together with other patriotic organizations and individuals. The Legislature of 1920 made an annual appropriation of $13,000 which was supplemented by private subscriptions, and Arkansas entered upon an intensive campaign. The slogan, "Let's

sweep illiteracy out of Arkansas," has met with a hearty response by the whole people of the state. Arkansas has apportioned a certain number of her illiterates to be reached within a definite time. One-fourth of them will be taught each year until the task is done. Governor Thomas C. McRae in the following proclamation declared "illiteracy is the greatest stain upon the state":

> Because I believe that the best way to reduce crime and poverty is through education of adults as well as children,
>
> Because I believe that every man and woman in Arkansas has a right to an education,
>
> Because I believe that the greatest stain upon our state is the condition of adult illiteracy. Nearly 100,000 men and women in Arkansas cannot write their names,
>
> Because I believe that united effort on the part of the citizens of Arkansas will speedily eradicate this evil,
>
> I hereby designate the week beginning February 5 and ending February 12, as "Illiteracy Week" to be known as such throughout the entire state.

I call upon the bankers, the lawyers, the merchants and the men of all stations in life to lend their efforts toward encouraging people to learn to read and write.

I call upon Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, Civitan Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Y. M. C. A.'s, Y. W. C. A.'s, K. of C.'s, S. I. A.'s, fraternal societies and lodges and all other organizations, be they small or great, to volunteer moral and financial aid in driving out our enemy, ignorance.

I call upon the ministers of Arkansas to set aside one Sunday within the period designated as a day to be devoted to preaching adult education.

I call upon the teachers and pupils of our public schools to take the message as planned by the Illiteracy Commission, into every community.

I call upon every citizen in the State to assist in this movement by teaching at least one person who wants some education or more education.

Given under my hand and the great seal of the State at the Capitol at Little Rock this 21st day of January, A.D. 1922.

Dr. John H. Finley, Commissioner of Education of New York State, launched a state-wide

campaign against illiteracy in that state in 1917. Only $3,200 was appropriated at first, but interest in the work so increased that $140,000 was appropriated in 1919. Governor Alfred G. Smith in signing the bill said in a memorandum:

> The purpose of this bill is to obliterate adult illiteracy from the State. This subject is one in which I have long been interested. The plan proposed through this measure appears to be so practicable and reasonable that its operations may, in my judgment, be made effective in accomplishing the desired purpose.

New York appropriated $200,000 the following year, and within four years after starting the movement, had expended a half million dollars from her state and local treasuries on educating illiterate native and foreign-born adults. The State Department reports some two hundred thousand taught to read and write. It was the first state to secure the illiteracy census of 1920 from the Federal Census Bureau This was placed in the hands of the school

Jewish mothers in New York improving their education.

authorities by Dr. Finley, who wrote to his lieutenants:

> I hope that we shall immediately and vigorously take advantage of this census of 1920 which has, through special effort and provision, been put so promptly at our disposal, to clear the state of adult illiteracy as you have practically done for child illiteracy.

Dr. Thomas E. Finegan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Pennsylvania, is a well-known champion of the illiterates of the nation and their cause and the State of Pennsylvania is making great strides in reducing illiteracy under his leadership. An extensive program of instruction for the illiterates and the Americanization of foreigners has been carried on in the state since 1918. The State Department of Education reported 20,378 taught during the year 1919 alone. The name of every illiterate taken by the census enumerators in 1920 is on record in Pennsylvania, having been obtained from the Federal Census Bureau.

With the stimulus of achievement back of her and with splendid organization, plans and leadership, Pennsylvania bids fair to realize her slogan—"Pennsylvania a literate state in ten years."

Ohio is engaged in the fight on illiteracy. Much skirmishing has been done by the State Department of Education and by Dr. S. K. Mardis, of Ohio University, a pioneer crusader in that state, and in 1922 a State Illiteracy Commission was created and the work among illiterates started as a state-wide campaign.

Maine, under the leadership of Dr. Augustus O. Thomas, State Superintendent of Schools, has a five-year program for wiping out illiteracy. Maine has 20,240 illiterates and this five-year program will include the teaching of some four thousand each year, a thing easily possible of accomplishment. Maine thus expects to free herself from illiteracy by 1926. The politicians watch Maine closely in election times and have a saying, "As goes Maine, so goes America." If the Nation can afford to follow

Maine in things political, it can well afford to emulate her in the emancipation of its illiterates.

North Dakota wages war on illiteracy in a determined fashion and with the avowed intention to surpass all of the other states. "No illiteracy in 1924" is her goal. She has 9,937 to teach and practically her whole population has entered into the crusade in a plucky spirit, resolved to get at least half of them taught before the end of the year, 1922. The spirit of these North Dakota crusaders was illustrated by two young teachers who were asked, "Have you any illiterates in your districts?" and replied with eagerness, "Oh, we hope we have." They, like all of North Dakota, want to play their part in making their state the first literate state in the Union.

Massachusetts and the other New England states, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island, have extended the opportunity to their adult illiterates under certain ages and conditions.

Virginia has had moonlight schools in her

remote sections, West Virginia in her coves, Texas on her ranches, Louisiana in her parishes, Michigan in her lumber camps and the Dakotas on their plains. Moonlight schools have ministered to illiterate fishermen on the coast of Maryland, illiterate immigrants on the coast of California, illiterate Swedes in Minnesota, illiterate Indians in Oklahoma, illiterate Mexicans in New Mexico and illiterate white and colored people through the mountains and valleys of the South.

With the slogans, "Illiteracy in Alabama—Let's remove it," "No illiteracy in New York State," "Pennsylvania a literate state in ten years," "No illiteracy in North Dakota in 1924," "Let South Carolina secede from illiteracy," "Let's sweep illiteracy out of Arkansas," "Illiteracy in Mississippi—Blot it out," "Illiteracy in New Mexico must go," the states have sounded a battle-cry which means the death-knell of illiteracy in the Nation.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PURPOSE OF THE MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

In all the decades prior to the one ushered in by 1910, there was not a state, county, city or school district which had as its purpose the absolute removal of illiteracy. When the startling announcement was made by the census-takers at the beginning of the new decade that five and a half million men and women in the Nation had confessed that they could not read or write, there was nowhere an expression of shame or pity or even of surprise. It was accepted as a thing inevitable—the waste product of an inefficient school system. Even the press, usually alert and looking for unusual conditions to exploit, found nothing worth featuring in these tragic figures.

There was a vagueness and confusion in the

public mind as to the term illiteracy and what constituted it, where the boundary line between literacy and illiteracy was fixed. Not one person out of ten in the United States could define illiteracy. Few had thought of it at all or had taken occasion to familiarize themselves with the term. It was such an unfamiliar one that the first Illiteracy Commission had to impress itself, to explain itself—its very name, repeatedly. Forestry commissions and fish and game commissions were familiar enough but one which had as its purpose to redeem men and women from illiteracy was a foreign and unintelligible thing. The public, in general, knew little of the baneful effects of illiteracy on the individual or the community. Searching the files of educational reports we find no addresses on this subject, and on the shelves of the public libraries there was nothing to be found save a few statistical reports in scientific journals. The man who made his mark aroused no more concern than the one who wrote his signature. Nowhere in all history is there a record of more

general apathy having settled down on a crying need or a worthy cause.

The example of a few states leading out in the early part of the decade in a crusade against illiteracy without federal oversight or aid, without funds from the state and with but little public sentiment aroused, and the readiness with which state after state recognized the need, sought the remedy and fell into line, is one of the most hopeful chapters in educational history.

The moonlight school has as its avowed purpose the removal of illiteracy. It has its secondary aims and its indirect results, but until illiteracy is banished it must remain devoted to the one idea of redeeming illiterates—of freeing them from their bondage.

This purpose was being fulfilled when the first three illiterates in Rowan County learned to read and write and when the first district banished illiteracy and it is being fulfilled today wherever, through its influence and example, adult illiterates are being emancipated. When the first three illiterates learned to read and

write, the representatives of those three classes —the illiterate mother, the man in his prime and the youth with all of life opening out before him—it was an evidence that all illiterates of normal mentality could be redeemed. The first few who learned served to show the possibility, the practicability and the ease with which knowledge could be imparted to all the rest.

To con over the fascinating figures of illiterates redeemed in the various counties of some states in their initial campaigns is an inspiring thing, and is an earnest of what a few more years of effort with more means, trained leaders and better methods will bring about. Leslie County, Kentucky, in its initial campaign in 1915, taught 600 to read and write; Tatnall County, Georgia, emancipated 600 in a campaign of two years. Santa Fé County, New Mexico, taught 1,549, the majority of them being illiterates. All three were pioneering. What more hopeful record of educational progress can one contemplate than is to be found in the report of the Georgia Illiteracy Commission, prepared

by its Secretary, State Superintendent M. L. Brittain, a few months after the illiteracy campaign began in that state.

> Number of illiterates taught to read and write:
> Tellfair County, 500; Washington County, 555; Fulton County, 632; Muscogee County, 638; Bibb County, 665.

One turns to the record in Kentucky to the reports of county school superintendents, and these are some of the figures that give assurance that the moonlight school is fulfilling its purpose.

> Number taught to read and write during a period of four years prior to 1920:
> Bath County, 750; Clay County, 900; Bell County, 1,000; Magoffin County, 1,400; Floyd County, 1,600.

How much more fruitful could one expect any campaign to be than that which was started to teach the illiterates of North Carolina in 1914, and shortly afterward reported 10,000 taught to read and write? The purpose of the moon-

light schools was fulfilled in this 10,000 redeemed from illiteracy, in the 17,892 taught in Georgia's opening campaign, in the 25,000 that Alabama taught in a few years' time and in the thousands emancipated by other states. In all these the moonlight school was achieving its purpose and pointing the way to the ultimate goal—the elimination of illiteracy from the Nation.

Not in all the states have the schools for illiterates borne the name of moonlight schools. Some after successfully launching the movement under this name adopted names suited to their peculiar conditions, such as the "The Lay-By Schools" of South Carolina, "The Adult Schools" of Alabama, "The Community Schools" of North Carolina and the "Schools for Grown-ups" of Georgia. In some of the states the plan and purpose were adopted but not the name. Eventually when these schools are firmly wedded to the public-school system they may all take the prosaic name of evening schools, just as the "Old Field Schools of the South" and other pioneers of the day school

system became known as the public or common schools.

In their first wave of enthusiasm, some of the states set a high goal. No less than six of them had as their aim to wipe out illiteracy by 1920. This would have been easily possible with some had funds been promptly provided and the co-operation of the whole people given in fullest measure. As it was, it was possible to set many illiterates free and to place before the people the ideal of removing illiteracy from a definite place within a given time. A worthy goal is a great inspiration, and none who strove to wipe illiteracy out of a definite section by 1920 will give up in despair because they arrived only half or one-third of the way. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp," says Browning. "Or what's a Heaven for?" Those who realized even a portion of their aim now see how humane, patriotic and practical it is to redeem the adult illiterates and will simply set their mark ahead and "run their race with patience," expecting to make the finish before the next decade.

North Dakota, which has but a few thousands to redeem, has well set the year 1924 as the time when it will be clear of illiteracy, while Pennsylvania, with tremendous numbers, wisely gives herself ten years to finish the task.

Victor Hugo says, "There is something that is mightier than armies, and that is an idea whose time has come." The moonlight school in 1911 advanced the idea that illiteracy could be wiped out of a given locality within a given time. It is an idea that has taken such firm hold on the public mind that nothing less than the emancipation of every illiterate will satisfy the public conscience. The removal of illiteracy is now the fixed purpose of the Nation.

The National Educational Association, the greatest influence in educational affairs of the United States, has accepted the idea and has made the removal of illiteracy the first provision in its educational program for America. This association now has its illiteracy commission, the National Council of Education, the General Federation of Women's Clubs and other great

national organizations have their illiteracy committees, appointed for one purpose—to wipe illiteracy out of the Nation. Many of the Governors have urged in their messages to the Legislature or in their inaugural addresses that the state will undertake to immediately redeem all of its illiterates. In the presidential campaign of 1920 the eradication of illiteracy was a reform written into the platform of one of the two major parties and urged by the candidates of both parties as one of the tasks to which the Nation must apply itself.

The idea of eradicating illiteracy has taken firm hold of the Nation's leaders. Congressman Horace M. Towner, of Iowa, in making the report of the Committee on Education to the National House of Representatives, said of the first county that had attacked illiteracy: "This experiment conclusively shows that it is possible to bring help to illiterate men and women even under the most adverse circumstances. It demonstrates the fact that under proper leader-

ship and under proper direction adult illiteracy is easily and quickly wiped out."

Champ Clark and Ollie James, both former Kentucky school teachers, had the spirit of comradeship with the moonlight school teachers and found many ways of aiding and encouraging them in their gallant fight on illiteracy, while William Jennings Bryan crowned the teachers with these words spoken in an address at Raleigh, North Carolina: "If there are any who have ever realized these words of the Master, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' it must be the teachers of the moonlight schools." President Wilson stopped his work one busy day to write and commend a Kentucky moonlight school teacher who had won a Congressman's prize for teaching the best moonlight school in his Congressional district. This letter, accompanied by the President's picture, was a commendation of all moonlight school teachers and the idea for which they stood just as President Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Bixby was

a letter glorifying all mothers who had given sons in the Civil War.

All of the agitation against adult illiteracy, in which the moonlight school has been the pioneer and dramatic factor, has made illiteracy appear as a disgraceful and unpopular thing. There is an odium attached to it to-day that was lacking in the years gone by. Illiteracy has been stigmatized where the crusade against it has been waged and made to seem a thing to flee from as from leprosy. One who makes his mark is not now ignored or overlooked, but in many communities and in most of the states he is a subject of deep concern. His act will scarcely be passed by without discussion. Those who observe him in this act will relate his story with all its pathos and the disgrace connected with it and will not fail to apply the moral. The result is usually the supplying of the unfortunate with books and teaching him to read and write.

There are communities to-day that feel a sense of responsibility for teaching every illiterate, and for doing it within a brief and definite time.

There are some districts that feel illiteracy to be a reproach under which they cannot rest. Governor Henry J. Allen, of Kansas, who made an investigation of the moonlight schools, wrote in a magazine article as follows:

> Two men met on a mountain pathway, and began to talk about how soon their county would be "Cleared up." They were not referring to weeds or underbrush or timber, to insects, reptiles or malarial fever. They were referring to the elimination of illiteracy. Nothing just like it has found expression in any educational system, in any age; the sureness of faith of those who teach, the simplicity of their efforts, the general response. I have seen three generations studying the same books in one moonlight school. "There are 2,442 illiterates in the county," said a man to me in one of the counties in the Cumberland Mountains. "It will take two years to wipe out illiteracy." Think of the calm faith of it! I believe that the story of the moonlight schools is the most exalted and sacrificial that has been told in the educational effort of America.

The newspapers now find a fertile field in illiteracy statistics and have come to devote

space and headlines to them, giving them ranking interest with the most vital things of the day. The purpose of the moonlight school is so outstanding that it has captured the pens of cartoonists. These have vividly pictured illiteracy in all its evil, its weakness and its disgrace. It is only a matter of time until poets, sculptors and artists will here find a theme for their art.

The change of attitude toward adult illiteracy has not come about without some resistance, some opposition, of course. Where such indifference and such ignorance prevailed in regard to a subject it could hardly be expected that reform could move forward without some interference and obstacles. Some educated people had no more intelligent idea, at the outset, about removing illiteracy, than had a certain old colored professor in Mississippi when the crusade was started in that state. The teachers in their examinations were asked the question, "How rid the state of adult illiteracy?" and the professor wrote this answer: "The only

way to rid the state of adult illiteracy is to get rid of the adults. You should not have adults around your place or anywhere. As long as you have adults around, you'll always have illiteracy."

The education of the educated to the problem of illiteracy has been no small part of the crusade. The pioneers had to educate themselves as to the nature and scope of the problem and the plan of attack, to educate the public to cooperate—some to contribute funds, a larger group to give service, and the whole public to give their moral support. The public had to be brought under indictment for the illiteracy statistics, which, viewed in bulk for state and Nation, had seemed too stupendous to arouse a feeling of responsibility in community or individual, but when analyzed and presented for counties and local communities produced an entirely different effect. The right of adult illiterates to learn had been challenged, their ability to do so had been questioned, the advisability of having teachers assume the extra duty of

teaching them had been doubted, the statistics, when analyzed and brought close to home had been disputed and resented; demagogues had assumed that any reference to the illiteracy of the state or community meant to traduce it, professional politicians had gloried in holding the purse-strings of the public treasury as tight as possible against any invasion for such a cause, and a few educators so violently opposed illiterates being taught to read and write that it brought forth from a layman the caustic comment, "The greatest trouble with some educators is that they are so opposed to education."

The illiterates themselves had to be educated to an understanding of their opportunity. Not everyone came rushing out to school in every district when the schools first opened. An institution so new as a school where illiterate adults could learn to read and write may easily be misunderstood, criticized and even resented by those who need it most. Considering the mistaken attitude of the educated for generations past on the question of teaching them, it is not

at all strange that some of the illiterates, themselves, with minds so befogged and darkened, should have had doubts and misconceptions of the school and what it would do for them. My father, himself a former school teacher, but later a physician, greeted me once in the early days of the movement with the remark, "What fool thing is this you are doing? I hear that you have old Jimmie Thomas and old Dicie Carter going to school."

His was the viewpoint, at the time, of the average educated man. That illiterates could overcome their fears and their pride with such sentiments being expressed around them is a credit both to them and to the teachers who persuaded them that it was within their power to learn to read and write.

The change in the public attitude toward illiteracy in the states that have had campaigns has been eminently worth while. Alabama realized this when her progressive program of school legislation passed so readily due to the awakened public sentiment brought about by her crusade;

Kentucky was in no mood to provide special officers to enforce her lax and inadequate compulsory attendance laws until the illiteracy campaign had swept over the state and shown her how foul and frightful a thing was illiteracy in either child or adult. Arkansas and other states that wage war on illiteracy talk of it "awakening an educational conscience." This is one of the purposes of the moonlight school—to awaken the educated to their responsibility, to create in them a desire to redeem the illiterates, as well as to arouse the illiterates to seek their freedom. All of this means more than freeing a state from illiteracy. It means a new appreciation of education, a devotion to it which will not cease with the illiteracy crusade, but will affect the public school system from the elementary school to the university. You cannot teach the illiterates of the district to read and write without increasing the educational spirit of the community and improving the school advantages of the children. You cannot start the educated out on a crusade to redeem their illit-

erate neighbors without arousing in them a sentiment for better education for their own and their neighbors' children and for better educational conditions throughout the system for future generations.

The moonlight school movement does not assume to be an educational regeneration. It assumes but one duty and that is to redeem the illiterates. Its by-products, however, are increased attendance in the day schools, increased interest in school improvement, intelligent support of progressive legislation and other things that vitalize and help the schools. Some who have no vision of a community redeemed from illiteracy and no sympathy with the illiterates are often heard to remark, "The best result of the moonlight school is its effect on day-school attendance." A thing must first have a good direct effect before it can produce a good indirect one. Teachers declare that the moonlight schools increase day-school attendance all the way from ten to thirty per cent, but the moonlight schools could not accomplish this did they

not achieve their primary purpose, that of teaching the illiterates to read and write.

In 1910 there was not a law on the statute books of any of the states referring to adult illiteracy. In 1920 there were laws providing for the teaching of adult illiterates; laws providing salaries for teachers to teach them; laws providing for training of teachers of adult illiterates; laws compelling illiterates of certain ages to learn, and laws providing for their instruction at home or in factory, mill or mine.

The spirit behind these laws could not and never will be fully translated into legislative acts. The determination of the illiteracy crusaders in the different states is like that of the colonists in the American Revolution. When the English Secretary urged an increase of troops in Boston until their guns outnumbered the Americans, Pitt declared, "We must reckon not so much with their guns as with their sentiments of liberty." The emancipation of all the illiterates in the United States is not a dream of the far future. The challenge to liberate them

has been answered by leaders all over the nation with the slogan, "No illiteracy in the United States in 1930."

The secondary purpose of the moonlight school—to afford an opportunity to the near-illiterate and the half-uneducated—may, when illiteracy is vanquished, become its primary and most practical one. All over the land there are many who dream of completing their education some time, and even the well-educated will not scorn the opportunity to improve. A Kentucky woman of forty who was a graduate of a well-known college, was asked this question, "If you had your choice of all the good things of life, what would it be?" "I'd rather go to school," she said. She lived in one of the most cultured communities, but she expressed the wish for a moonlight school to be established, saying, "I'd like to review my American history and if nobody will teach the class I'll teach it myself for the sake of the review." There are many like this woman who would choose a term in school to every other blessing. While they have paid

school taxes and hungered for educational opportunities, the school plant has remained closed for all but six hours of the day during a brief school term in many communities. There are 8,760 hours in a year and the school plant is open only 960 of these hours in some districts, where only six-months schools are conducted, a tremendous waste in the school plant, but a greater one in human intellect and aspirations.

A day school in every community! Once it was a doubtful experiment, but now it is an established institution and forever so. It has come up through trials, tribulations and struggles innumerable. A night school in every community! If it is an educated community, a night school for more education, for culture and specialization; if an illiterate community, for the emancipation of the illiterates and their new birth into the realms of knowledge and power!

The public school should be as liberal in its policy as is in the church. It has no right to say to men and women, "If you embrace

me not before a certain age or before a certain hour in the day I will close my doors to you forever." The hour of a man's opportunity should be any hour in which he awakens to his need whether it be at the age of six or a hundred and six.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE NEED OF MOONLIGHT SCHOOLS

The time has passed when intelligent men dispute the need of everyone to be able to read and write.

There was a time in the dark ages when learning first began to lift its head, that the proud knight boasted that he could not read or write —mere priest-craft much beneath him. Quite late in English history it was held derogatory for the nobility to spell well. These baser arts were for their inferiors. Their attitude was that of Douglas, in Scott's poem "Marmion," who exclaimed:

> Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
> Save Gawain ne'er could pen a line.

Royal Governor Berkeley, writing home to England in the seventeenth century, "thanked God that no public schools nor printing presses

existed in the colony," and added his hope that none would be introduced for a hundred years "since learning brings irreligion and disobedience into the world and the printing press disseminates them and fights against the best intentions of the government."

George Washington and the other founders of our Nation held views just the opposite of those expressed by Lord Berkeley and they, almost without exception, left their message urging that the people be enlightened. Washington made a provision in his will that his negro slaves under twenty-five years of age should be taught to read and write. This is significant. It shows that the Father of our Country believed that even those who were physically enslaved should be mentally free and, also, that he considered learning to read and write a process not necessarily confined to childhood.

The Chinese have a tradition that when the art of writing was born all nature was moved, Heaven rained millet, demons wailed in the

night and dragons hid in the depths. One can well believe that its appearance on the earth created this commotion when it is realized that with writing came the mightiest power for combating error and removing all manner of evil. How strange it seems that men have not poured out this power more freely on their fellow men!

Life itself is more or less dependent upon the ability to read and write. In no place is disease so prevalent or life so menaced as in illiterate sections. During the influenza epidemic of 1918, doctors and nurses found themselves helpless in communities where illiteracy prevailed. The death-rate is high where illiteracy exists and infant mortality mounts to the topmost round. Here the precautions of sanitation are little known and practised, and innocent children pay the penalty with their lives. "You say you have six children," said an illiterate mother to an educated one, "That's nothing. I've buried twelve."

After the most destructive war in all history the conservation of human life is naturally re-

ceiving much attention, but illiteracy offers a serious handicap to this noble enterprise. A health car was sent out in one of the states to demonstrate facts concerning preventable diseases, and in a few weeks the director of the car wrote in, "The car will have to be brought in and overhauled. So many people come on it who cannot read and write, the printed charts are not practical." The car was brought back and glass jars, filled to certain depths with marbles of different sizes and colors to illustrate the mortality of various diseases, were substituted for the charts of letters and figures. This was in the United States—not in Russia, though it reminds one of the system in use in illiterate sections of that country—the placing of pictures over the shops instead of lettered signs, the ringing of bells to indicate the time of trains, and other devices used in a land where illiteracy has long reigned supreme.

Law is less respected and law violations are more common where illiteracy flourishes, and the court costs are heavy in such communities

as compared with those of education and culture. An investigation made in seventeen typical states in one year showed that the number of convicted criminals from the illiterate portions of those states was seven times as large as from the educated portions.

In the most lawless district in Rowan County, I approached the school-house one evening during the third term of the moonlight schools and stopped at the threshold overawed by the unusual scene. The house was filled with men and women and every head was bent over the Bible intently studying. It was indicative of the change which had come over the district with the education of the adults. In the years that followed, the court records, once filled with the misdeeds committed in that district, were left blank.

Illiteracy of parents is depriving more children of school advantages than any other one thing. The most illiterate counties in the United States, according to the census of 1910 had an illiteracy of 60.5 percent and 63.1 percent re-

spectively. The former had an average school attendance of 21.2 percent, the latter 24.7 percent—an average in these two counties of less than three out of every ten children in school. Compared with other counties in the same states one with 11.5 percent illiteracy and 63.2 percent school attendance and another with 10.7 percent illiteracy and 67.8 percent school attendance—nearly seven out of every ten children in school—the result of illiteracy on school attendance is striking.

Illiteracy begets illiteracy. An examination of the census reveals this clearly. The names of parents and grandparents on the illiteracy list are usually followed by the names of most of their progeny. A family name is duplicated many times on the list. As a measure for insuring the education of the coming generation, the illiterate adults should be taught, for even where compulsory attendance laws are well enforced, public sentiment back of them is the only thing that can make them completely effective.

Education is a great cause and needs the millions of illiterates as its converts and its friends. Even if they did not need the book and pen, or would not use the power to read and write, after it had been conferred upon them, but became friends and advocates of the school instead of remaining indifferent or antagonistic, as some of them undoubtedly are, this alone would justify their being taught.

Uncle Martin Sloan walked sixteen miles to have a talk with me after he had learned to read and write. He said, "My learning may never do me much good. My hands are stiff and I can't write much; my eyes are bad and I can't see to read a great deal, but I see now what I've missed in life, and I want to tell you what I'm going to do—I'm going 'round to every home in my district just before school begins each year, as long as I live, and urge the parents to send their children to school." A friend of education! Oh, that every one of the five million illiterates in America might become as this old man and others redeemed

from illiteracy, who will not tolerate the crime of keeping children out of school!

Some used to say that laboring men worked better and were more contented, if illiterate. There never was a greater fallacy. Illiteracy never plowed a furrow straighter nor produced an extra bushel to the acre. It never turned out a better product from factory, field or mine. It handicaps the laborer, making his task more difficult, his position less secure and his life less safe. Not only is he handicapped in carrying out the instructions of his employer, but, also, in the safe and skillful handling of machinery and tools. Illiterate and coarse workmen cannot be trusted with the delicate tools and, as a rule, are given the clumsy sort that will endure the rough handling without breakage. This hampers them, at the outset, burdening them as with ball and chain and giving the educated laborer every advantage. In a Southern city illiterate and educated laborers worked side by side cleaning the streets. The illiterate laborers used clumsy hoes with rough, heavy

handles, weighing twelve pounds, and the educated workmen used light and graceful ones weighing but two. Each laborer pulled twenty pounds on the average, at each stroke. The illiterate laborers pulled twelve pounds of hoe and eight pounds of mud while their educated companions pulled two pounds of hoe and eighteen pounds of mud. The result was more than twice as great when guided by intelligence as when guided by physical power alone.

Man's daily bread is, in a measure, dependent upon his ability to read and write, which not only increases but creates earning power. Many a man has started out searching for work and found himself barred from one position after another because he could not read or write. Prior to the World War illiterate men were losing their jobs and being replaced by the educated, a tendency which is constantly on the increase.

Uncle Jeff, an illiterate darky of the old-time Southern type, had been drayman for years for a large manufacturing company and had

come to consider himself a fixture when an order of the Illinois Central Railway company struck him like a thunderbolt. It was to the effect that no freight should be delivered to anyone who could not read and sign the freight receipts. The company felt obliged, of course, to part with Uncle Jeff. "Aunt Sally," his wife, blamed this calamity on the schools and rushed to the nearest member of the school board to protest against the outrage, "Hit's jist a gittin' so a man cain't do nothin' 'thout he kin read and write," she wailed. "Ef hit keeps on hit'll soon be so a man cain't even plow his cawn 'thout he kin read what's printed on the plow beam." The poor old colored woman spoke more truth, in her resentment than she knew. It is becoming next to impossible in this complex and highly specialized age for a man to hold any sort of position unless he can read and write.

The lives of laboring men are endangered by illiteracy. The "Safety First" movement is designed to instruct the people in care and

watchfulness on every hand to prevent the destruction of life and property, but the first precaution of safety for the millions of illiterates is to teach them to read and write. All the danger signs put up before them might as well be held before the eyes of the blind, and yet the legal responsibility of employers in some states ceases with the posting of such signs. How much the removal of illiteracy contributes to the safety of the laboring man is indicated by this report from Henry Ford's plant where educational work is carried on, "Accidents in this plant have decreased fifty-four percent since employees have been able to read factory notices and other instructions."

Commerce is stifled by illiteracy to a degree little suspected by the average business man. The illiterates, being unable to sign their checks, usually hold their money out of the bank; being unable to read newspapers and magazines, they seldom put their names on subscription lists; realizing that their predicament is made more awkward by travel, they remain off of trains,

as a rule, and the railroads lose the passenger receipts. Having no appreciation of luxuries and their earnings being too limited to buy, they restrict trade, in illiterate communities, to the coarsest commodities.

In a county where one-third of the population was illiterate according to the census of 1910 the assessor's list showed less than $1,000 invested in household furniture, less than $500 in agricultural implements, although it was an agricultural county, less than $43 in watches and clocks, not a dollar in gold, silver or plated ware or jewelry, and only one diamond ring in the whole county and it was the property of a bride who had moved in. Lace curtains, china, rugs, and paintings had no market here, and chiffon, georgette and other delicate fabrics of feminine wear were things unknown. If there were but one such county in the United States it might not be a matter of concern to the tradesman, but with many such in existence and some with even forty and fifty and sixty percent who cannot read or write, illiteracy is something for

the enterprising business man to consider when he is figuring profit and loss.

While waiting in a railway station in Mississippi in June, 1917, I noticed that every available foot of space was plastered with advertising asserting the superiority of certain products. Familiar brands of grape juice, soda, baking powder, flour, soap and cleansers were emblazoned there in all the well-known effectiveness of the American advertiser. Thirty to forty percent of the population of the six surrounding counties could not read, so thirty to forty cents of every dollar spent in advertising was wasted here.

The State collects no revenue save poll tax from ninety percent of its illiterate citizens. Uncle Sam has overlooked an important source of revenue which if streaming into his coffers from five million pockets would soon pay his enormous war debt. If all the illiterates in this country were taught to read and write, even did they average no more than one letter each month, they would pay into the treasury

annually, at the present rate of postage, more than a million dollars.

The Surgeon General's report on illiteracy in the American Army showed that out of a million and a half registrants examined, one man out of every four was unable to read and understand a newspaper or to write a letter home. The exact percentage of illiteracy among these men, he stated, was 24.9 percent and ran as high as 49.5 percent in men sent from one of the states. This seems most startling in any light that it may be viewed, but it appears all the more significant when compared with illiteracy in the ranks of our allies—France having only three illiterates out of every hundred in the army and England with only one out of every hundred. Most of all does it stagger us to compare our illiteracy figures with those of our recent enemy—only one out of every five thousand in the German army was unable to read and write.

The bravery of illiterate soldiers who served in the late war is unquestioned. In individual

cases and single handed where they could employ pioneer methods of warfare they, undoubtedly, did well but when it was a case for concerted action, of obeying orders and of co-operation with the troops, their lack of education told on them most tragically.

One lieutenant said during the War, "I have three men in my company who cannot count up to four." In one of the training camps where foreign-born soldiers were stationed, there were men who did not know the right hand from the left. Consequently, they were drilled, with a piece of rope in one hand a hammer in the other, to the command of "squads rope" and "squads hammer" instead of "squads right" and "squads left." A woman who was teaching a man of draft age said, "I could teach Ben just anything and it would be something he didn't know. He didn't even know how many months there are in a year."

This sort of ignorance in the army in even a small proportion of the men would have con-

stituted a weakness which, in a long drawn out contest, would have told mightily in the final results. There were 1,023,000 soldiers in the American Army who were illiterate according to the statistics branch of the general staff. This was an army within an army. They must have hindered their comrades oftentimes, besides being at a fearful disadvantage always themselves. The seriousness of this situation could not be overestimated. Next to the actual casualties, it was America's supreme tragedy of the War.

Illiterates are nowhere at a greater disadvantage than at the ballot box, where corrupt men often purchase their birthright for a mess of pottage or cheat them out of it entirely. Henry Van Dyke says, "To place the ballot in the hands of illiterate persons is like hanging a diamond around the neck of a little child and sending it out into the crowded street." The ballot has not only been placed in the hands of 2,273,603 illiterate male voters but since the enfranchisement of women, the number of illit-

erate voters in America has been augmented by, perhaps, two millions more. With over four million voters who cannot read their ballots, is the body politic sound, healthy, or even safe?

In a republic, society rests upon the intelligence of the people and only in universal education is democracy safe and liberty securely enthroned. A nation which has over four million illiterate voters is not strongly fortified to uphold any principle, and society is undermined and weakened at its very source. Since universal education is so essential to the success of a democracy it is a wonder that a provision was not written into the Constiution of the United States similar to the one once proposed by Cortez for the constitution of Spain, "That no person born after this day shall acquire the right of citizenship until he can read and write." Thomas Jefferson said of this, "It is impossible to sufficiently estimate the wisdom of this provision. Of all that have been thought of for securing fidelity in the administration of government and progressive advance-

ment of the human mind or changes in human affairs, it is the most effectual. Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppression of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day."

Nearly a hundred years later President Grant in his recommendations to Congress wrote as follows, "The compulsory support of free schools and the disfranchisement of all who cannot read and write the English language, after a fixed probation, would meet with my hearty approval." Had this recommendation been carried out and its execution accompanied with the opportunity for every man and woman, as well as every child, to learn to read and write, there would be no army of illiterate voters in this country marching to the polls on election day.

Illiterates, even though blind to books and helpless to ameliorate their own condition, are not without certain power to weaken, harass and damage a nation. Pancho Villa, the illiterate Mexican outlaw, disturbed the peace of two

nations. During the period of unrest following the War our Government faced a critical situation. While we struggled with bomb plots on the east coast and with strife and disturbance on the west, the danger from anarchist, Bolshevist and anti-American sources was greater than the general public ever knew. The poison spread by them could be neutralized among the educated classes through government bulletins and newspapers and magazine articles but was not so easily counteracted among the illiterate masses. Here walking delegates found fertile soil for their pernicious doctrines. Not only in time of war or in reconstruction but at all times are the illiterate masses easily influenced and misled.

There is a poor blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength and bound with bands of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel raise his hands
And shake the pillars of the Commonweal.

Would that it could be said of the United States as a certain citizen of Copenhagen said of his country when touring America in 1919,

"Bolshevism would make no headway in Denmark, as there is not a person in that country who cannot read or write his name, in fact write a letter. Where there is education, there is little chance of Bolshevism gaining a foothold."

The majority of America's illiterate millions, though born upon her soil, are as ignorant of the principles and traditions of their own country as they are of those of Italy or Spain. They have never realized or claimed their heritage of citizenship, never felt the thrill of intelligent patriotism that others have known. To teach them would not only enrich them as citizens but in the words of the prophet Isaiah would, "increase the nation and extend all the borders of the land."

Illiteracy is one of the great handicaps to religion. In its centers churches and Sunday schools cannot thrive. The most literate county in the State of Kentucky has numerous churches while the most illiterate county has but one, and that is in the county seat. The number of Sunday schools in Rowan County doubled after

the illiteracy campaign. Men need mental development to put them into intelligent relation with their Creator, to give them an understanding of the Divine Being. "I cannot give an illiterate man even an intelligent conception of God," said a woman who attempted to teach a Sunday school class of illiterate men in prison.

If the Christian world could realize how illiterates yearn to read the Bible, the followers of the Master would hasten with swift feet to unlock its pages to them. Had it not been the will of our Heavenly Father that all should be taught to read and write, He would not have given His Word to the world in the form of a book.

A woman in Louisa, Kentucky, prayed for ten years for a Bible and the power to read it. She was presented with one by her sons, but it was in the days before the illiteracy crusade and they did not think of teaching her to read it. She learned, however, by having a neighbor's children teach her the letters on box cars switched off on a railway siding near her milk-

gap. She lived to enjoy her Bible for ten years after it had become to her an open book and she marked the passages which comforted her most. These were read at her funeral where this story of her triumph over illiteracy was publicly told.

Abraham Lincoln's boyhood prayer was not for wealth or fame or the high position of Chief Executive. It was,

> God help mother, help father, help sister,
> Help everybody. *Teach me to read and write.*
> Watch over Honey and make him a good dog;
> And keep us all from getting lost in the wilderness. Amen.

How many illiterates are praying today, "Teach me to read and write?" How many hunger and thirst after knowledge but know not how to secure it? *"Give me knowledge or I shall die,* has been the prayer of countless millions," says David Swing, the great American divine.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CALL OF THE ILLITERATES

Plato said, "I believe that every immortal soul is the offspring of a divine thought, of a divine purpose, and that God has in His mind a picture like unto which He would have everyone of us to become." It cannot be that God so just, so merciful, ever had it in His mind that any human being should be ultimately and forever illiterate. It is not the will of our Heavenly Father that millions remain in ignorance or that thousands have filled illiterate graves, that

> Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
> Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll,

nor is it by the will of the illiterates themselves but through the shortsightedness and selfishness of educated men.

The illiterate is more to be pitied than the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, and he has

an affliction, in a measure, equal to that of the insane. The illiterate can see, but is blind to all the lore over which the masters have striven and left to bless the world; he can hear, he can distinguish sound, but cannot appreciate music; he can talk, but is powerless to express the sweetest combinations of his native language or the highest emotions of his soul; he can walk, not with the upright, independent step of the educated man, but even in his shambling gait he reveals the burden that he bears; he has a mind, not muddled as the insane, but dwarfed, undeveloped and unacquainted with all the beautiful things for which it was created. "Short-armed ignorance," says Shakespeare. Short-armed indeed! Unable to reach the book on the shelves of yonder public library; unable to reach the magazine on that news-stand and to enjoy its contents or to reach the newspaper and keep himself informed of the progress of events and the movements of his fellow men; unable to reach the absent one with a message from his own heart; unable to reach the Sunday

Running Spring Ky
oct 3 1916

Miss Dora Wilson Stewart
Frankfort

Dear friend I am still in
school and would be glad you visit
us i am so much a bligе to tha
help you have been to us I have
not lots of leters sence last
year I have so many children
to rite to it keeps me bizy
I have Twelve an tha are in diferent
Stats so I hope to see you at
tha fair I hope you will have a
nice time if you come
yours friend

Patience M Sunsford

**MOTHER OF TWELVE CHILDREN LEARNS TO READ AND WRITE**

school lesson or church hymnal; unable to reach the Lord's prayer, the Twenty-third Psalm or Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

Those who would keep the illiterates out of their chance or who claim that they do not want to learn do them a great injustice. Undoubtedly there has long been a striving upward among the mass of illiterates which has needed but a helping hand to turn into actual achievement. Since many have been taught in the past decade it has given new hope and the urge to others, and has started them out seeking their sight. Like blind Bartimeus who sat by the roadside crying, "Thou son of David have mercy on me" the illiterates cry from everywhere. "Give me sight—have mercy on me." They call from the deep forests where brawny woodsmen with stunted brain fell the trees to build America's homes, its ships and bridges, they call from the pit of the mine where men, bent and blackened, dig the precious ore which sends a gleam athwart a million hearth-stones, they call from the noise and hum

of the factory where men slave and women toil to conserve the food and to produce the fabric which feeds and clothes their fellow-men, they call from the mountain fastnesses where men, walled in, have preserved the blood of a noble race to pour like the elixir of life into the nation's blood-stream, they call from the Southern cotton fields where Lincoln's black brother toils and knows no real emancipation—the emancipation of the mind—but waits for us to come and set him free. They call from the Western plains where dwell the sons of pioneers who braved the loneliness and dangers of a vast wilderness that they might advance the outposts of civilization.

Hasten the day when the rural as well as the city dweller, no matter where he may be, whether in the Southern cotton fields or on the Western plains, in the mountains, or by the sea, shall have a school which is not only open to his children and his grand-children by day, but one which is open to his father, his mother, his wife, his hired man and himself at night.

Alex Webb, aged 98, who learned to read and write in the Moonlight Schools.